

INTERVIEWS
INTERVIEWERS
and
INTERVIEWING
in Social Case Work



HV41
F21



AMERICAN FOUNDATION
FOR THE BLIND INC.

INTERVIEWS, INTERVIEWERS AND INTERVIEWING in Social Case Work

ARTICLES REPRINTED FROM "THE FAMILY"



FAMILY WELFARE ASSOCIATION OF AMERICA
130 EAST 22ND STREET
NEW YORK



HV 41

F21

Cap. 1

COPYRIGHT, 1931
BY THE
FAMILY WELFARE ASSOCIATION
OF AMERICA



C1

TABLE OF CONTENTS

	PAGE
<i>Foreword</i>	vii
The Worker's Attitude as an Element in Social Case Work, <i>by</i> Lucy Wright	1
A Study of Social Treatment, <i>by</i> Porter R. Lee	12
The Interview of Persuasion, <i>by</i> Jean M. Lucas	26
An Attempt to Articulate Processes, <i>by</i> Mary S. Brisley	34
The Use of the Transfer Within the Limits of the Office Interview, <i>by</i> Jessie Taft	41
The Art of Helping: Through the Interview, <i>by</i> Lucia B. Clow	47
Opening the Way, <i>by</i> Anna Vlachos	54
An Interview	61
Social Treatment from the Standpoint of a Client, <i>by</i> Claudia Wannamaker	68
Preparation for an Interview—Summary of a Staff Case Conference .	79
The Class Teaches Itself, <i>by</i> Helen P. Kempton	85
An Experiment in Student Training, <i>by</i> Florence Sytz	98
<i>Group Analyses of the Interview</i>	
Interviews, Interviewers and Interviewing, <i>by</i> Bradley Buell	106
Psychological Processes in Interviewing, <i>by</i> Helen L. Myrick	115
Techniques in Case Work, <i>by</i> Pearl Salsberry	124
<i>Index</i>	133

The interview is a joint quest—not an inquisition nor an imposition. There is little satisfaction in reaching a verbal agreement; what we are looking toward in an interview is starting a process.

GOODWIN B. WATSON

FOREWORD

“INTERVIEWING is the method through which most of the information used in social case work is secured and through which most of its results in treatment are insured,” according to the Milford Conference report on generic social case work. Undoubtedly the interview is the most important, perhaps the only sharply defined, tool in the task of winning confidence and changing attitudes—the so-called leadership task of social treatment. The material assembled in this volume represents in part the response of social case workers to the challenge expressed in 1923 by Porter Lee when he said that “analysis of the leadership aspects of treatment” depends on “the regular analysis by case workers themselves of the factors which have entered into their conspicuous successes and failures in human leadership.” All these articles have been printed in *The Family* and are gathered together here primarily to make them more easily accessible for staff discussion, for teaching students and volunteers, and as a basis for further and more exhaustive analysis. Their value lies to a large extent in the fact that out of a variety of experiences in many different parts of the country we find emerging certain procedures which are so similar as to suggest that here we have something approaching fundamental principles in the art of interviewing.

In no sense of the word are the articles here presented to be thought of as inclusive. Other articles on interviewing have been published in *The Family* from time to time and are listed in a bibliography which will be sent free on request. The articles on “The Recreation Interview” prepared by Miss Wannamaker and her colleagues at the Illinois Institute for Juvenile Research are particularly valuable as illustrating the use of the outline for a specific purpose. The American Association of Social Workers’ volume, *Interviews*, contains a group of interviews analyzed by a committee of the Chicago Chapter of that Association. Other articles on interviews are available in social work journals such as *Mental Hygiene*, *Social Forces*, *Social Service Review*, and so on.

The way in which the material in this volume may be used to help carry forward our thinking about social case work processes will of course vary with the teacher, the group, and the need of

the moment. Some of the articles, for instance, offer good background material. Such is Mr. Lee's¹ with its defining of executive and leadership aspects of treatment and its discussion of both subject matter and method. His illustrative interview brings out clearly some of the principles of successful interviewing—such as beginning with the client's main interest, the necessity for lapse of time, not assuming authority until your authority is recognized, respect for personality, releasing of the client's own capacity through giving him an opportunity to develop his own ideas, and so on. He points out the usefulness of a method of recording that would give insight into the how as well as the what of interviewing, an essential if we are to make any headway in understanding what happens in the case worker-client relationship.

In "The Worker's Attitude as an Element in Social Case Work,"² Miss Wright emphasizes the conscious attitude of the worker as a part of her interviewing skill. She stresses particularly the ways in which a creative attitude may be achieved. Her five "ways of increasing skill in individualizing" lead directly into the contribution that flexible imagination, objectivity (the way in which "a man may do a bit of speculating with his mind off of himself for once"), high expectations, may make to the establishing of rapport, the gaining of confidence, the arrival at a common purpose, and a sharing in the search for possible ways of building on the strengths of the client. This particular article brings out through illustration and precept the necessity for respect for personality, the creative participation without which skills become the mere mechanical pulling of strings.

The verbatim interview with a client given by Claudia Wanner³ is also basic. As the dialogue develops, it becomes increasingly evident that the attitude of the client is as important as is that of the interviewer and is too often completely ignored. It is not too much to say that awareness of the client's attitude is an indispensable element in the case worker's own attitude. It would be an interesting contribution to our thinking if we could have an identical interview written up by each of the participants. Whether or not "Social Treatment from the Standpoint of a Client" should be re-read, as one teacher in case work suggests, every six months, it might at least be thought of as an essential to

¹ "A Study of Social Treatment," page 12.

² Page 1.

³ "Social Treatment from the Standpoint of a Client," page 68.

the background of case workers, and it offers a screen against which we may bring out the lights and shadows of our current interviews.

Equally important as background is Dr. Taft's assertion that the interview represents an emotional relationship between client and worker.⁴ While an interview such as that with which Dr. Taft illustrates her points requires a high degree of skill, recognition and interpretation of the interplay of personalities are indispensable for the beginning case worker.

The three reports of the A.A.S.W. Chapter discussions⁵ of the interview offer a possible methodology for group approach to the study of professional processes. The groups themselves have emphasized their own feelings that the chief value of the discussions was to the participants, whose own thinking was carried forward by the process. The conclusions may have been outgrown in the process of reaching them, the process itself is a universally valid method of approach to the subject.

Mr. Buell's report⁶ emphasizes the fact that there are at least two participants in every interview, a fact so close to us that we are apt to overlook it. The four steps in the interview evolved by the New York group offer points on which to hang a good deal of the illustrative material which appears in the other articles in this volume; or they may be related to current case work interviews.

The illustrative interviews, with interpretations as to the how and why of the different steps, are particularly valuable for study groups of workers who have had actual field experience. Miss Clow's story of the Reilly family, for instance, gives clearly the results of getting the client's point of view, assuming that the client is intelligent (high expectations); and in the interview with Mrs. Grant we see the contribution of "setting," "being at ease," "listening quietly," and so on.⁷ The two interviews given in "Opening the Way"⁸ emphasize the setting, preparation, purpose, and the way in which a tense situation may be relieved by a casual attitude on the part of the case worker and by deliberately fixing attention on a non-controversial subject. In these

⁴ "The Use of the Transfer within the Limits of the Office Interview," page 41.

⁵ See pages 106 to 132.

⁶ "Interviews, Interviewers, and Interviewing," page 107.

⁷ "The Art of Helping: Through the Interview," page 48.

⁸ By Anna Vlachos, page 54.

interviews, as in "The Interview of Persuasion,"⁹ we see growth in thinking definitely stimulated by the case worker; that is, while the worker accepts the client's immediate interest, she definitely makes it a point of departure, not a permanent stopping place. In "An Interview,"¹⁰ we may follow the development of the sequence of the steps in the interview, the careful thinking through of preparation and approach with an analysis by the worker of the possible response of the client based on experience in previous contacts. Miss Brisley's "An Attempt to Articulate Processes"¹¹ may be used effectively in connection with these interpreted interviews to strengthen or emphasize various points. Her article also offers a method of articulating processes which could be used by a staff group in connection with current work.

Miss Kempton¹² and Miss Sytz¹³ are concerned more with the method than with the subject matter of teaching the art of interviewing. As Miss Sytz says, "In order to use case work processes consciously and purposefully, students must be encouraged to develop an experimental attitude toward case work and the part they play in the processes involved." In both these articles we follow the students' attempts to catch impressions of their own processes. The "Summary of a Staff Case Conference"¹⁴ deals with a phase of supervision that involves teaching as well. The outstanding contribution is in the way in which the worker's thinking is developed on the individual case. None of these articles on teaching method assume to have achieved any pattern or to offer new lines for procedure, but do point the way to further exploration as to ways in which the case worker's attitude may be kept consciously experimental.

MARGARET E. RICH

⁹ By Jean M. Lucas, page 26.

¹⁰ Page 61.

¹¹ Page 34.

¹² "The Class Teaches Itself," page 85.

¹³ "An Experiment in Student Training," page 98.

¹⁴ Page 79.

THE WORKER'S ATTITUDE AS AN ELEMENT IN SOCIAL CASE WORK¹

LUCY WRIGHT

THE first person whose attitude I remember being interested in as a child was that of Mrs. Gummidge, that "lone, lorn 'creetur'" in *David Copperfield*. Do you remember her—discontented and complaining but, when sorrow fell upon the family of Little Emily, transformed into a cheerful and helpful being busy dragging heavy ropes and spars and reassuring and taking care of the others? She changed just as anyone may change when they suddenly become aware that they are living in the presence of powers greater than their own. They seem to discover that they have some of the power inside themselves.

Later, I became even more keenly conscious of attitude in watching the lives of the blind, and carried over from their experiences as one of the dominant attitudes of life that attitude with which people may meet a thousand kinds of hard fortune as a challenge, best described in four lines by Sidney Lanier:

Oh, hunger, hunger, I would harness thee,
And make thee harrow all my spirit's glebe;
Of old the blind bard Hervé sang so sweet,
He made the wolf to plough his lands.

It is really a very simple thing I want to try to do with this word attitude. I want through it to answer this question: Shall we try to think about life in terms of social case work, or about social case work in terms of life? How shall we treat any man's case? In terms of his own life and of the daily lives of all of us, the art of living under the laws of life common to us all? Or must we rest content with seeing any man's case, studying it, treating it, discussing it, and interpreting it in terms of the technique of social work, in terms of our own efforts and those of other professions from whom we can borrow terms of their specializations?

The only way I can find of answering these questions is to outline my own philosophy of social work and life as an interpretation of the word attitude. Attitude is significant in social case work (which is a subhead under social discovery and social edu-

¹ From *The Family*, July, 1924.

cation) because it is significant in the art of living under the laws of life common to all of us—client, social case worker, and the rest of the world alike.

I believe that social case work is a search for the truth for creative purposes in the personality of the client, and in all his relationships. It will share in the creative purposes of social discovery and social education in proportion as it rises out of a creative attitude on the part of the worker. I am assuming that one's attitude depends upon one's religion, one's philosophy of social work and of life, and upon the plans of action resulting therefrom and checked up by experience.

I conceive of attitude as describing the application to human affairs of the dominant spirit of an individual; it may be good or bad. If it's the kind of thing that can be put on and taken off, like a coat, it is apt to be bad, I think. If it's the kind that rises to meet the given situation, each time as if for the first time, like the current with which the magnet meets the needle, it is very likely to be good. The pre-Christian use of the word *deimon* or *daemon*, of which I have recently come across two usages, helps in part to show what I mean by attitude. A great modern scientist, speaking of that small but important entity, the germ-cell, remarks that "although we do not understand how, it is not merely protoplasm, but deimon, as well." More dramatically, Shakespeare makes someone in *Antony and Cleopatra* remark:

Thy daemon (that's thy spirit which keeps thee) is
Noble, courageous, high, unmatchable.

Attitude in this sense may be said to represent the application of spirit to human affairs, in the same sense that Emerson speaks of justice as truth in its application to human affairs. But besides suggesting the thing that is innate in every individual and capable of cultivation and development and change, I choose attitude because it may represent at the same time beliefs and principles and plans of action. I cannot remember the time when the phrase, "not only with our lips but in our lives," did not ring in my ears; and it is because it stands for both states of mind and behavior that follows from them, that the feeling I have about attitude seems to transform that somewhat colorless word into one of glowing significance.

Mr. Bly, the window-washer in Galsworthy's *Windows* has something to say apropos of the attitude of search for significant states of mind rather than of immediate application of rules alone to the facts of the situation. His daughter, an unmarried mother at eighteen, had suffocated her baby (she didn't want to kill it, she said, she only wanted to save it from living; it didn't know it was alive). She has been on trial and Bly, in recalling the incidents of the trial, made the following comment:

"Why, I've known people who could see nothing but themselves and their own families unless they were drunk. At my daughter's trial, I see right into the lawyers, judge and all. There she was, hub of the whole thing, and all they could see of 'er, was 'ow she affected 'em personally. One tryin' to get 'er guilty, the other tryin' to get 'er off, and the judge summin' her up coldblooded."

Mr. March: "But that's what they're paid for, Mr. Bly."

Bly: "Ay, though which of them was thinkin' 'ere's a little bit o' warm life on its own, 'ere's a little dancin' creature. What's she feelin'? What's 'er complaint? Impersonal-like. I like to see a man do a bit of speculating with his mind off of himself for once."

What are the conditions under which the attitude we most desire, which might be called the creative attitude, toward one's self, one's fortunes, and other people, is likely to express itself? Creative possibilities depend upon the same factors for client and worker alike. Briefly expressed, the creative attitude expresses itself in social case work in two ways: First, when skill is used, in individualizing, i.e., in seeing the man behind the handicap, or the individual human beings in their relationships in the situation. And second, in relating the situation and the people in it to some vital concept of social work and of life. I should like to suggest five ways in which skill in individualizing may be increased: (1) by flexible imagination; (2) by being "non-shockable," keeping a light touch; (3) by working steadily through the positive, that is by finding and building on the strength rather than on the weaknesses of human nature; (4) by seeking skill in using the forces of expertness and authority rather than relying on the whip-hand; and (5) by developing a capacity to learn out of failures, evaluating them with one's self and the client.

Skill in relating the situation and the people in it to some vital concept of life and of social work may be advanced by keeping the standard of expectations high, that is, not helping people by premature or partial classification, by false sentiment or

other means, to the evasion of their own realities; by defining and coming to an understanding as to common purposes in a given instance, recognizing in conflicts the third thing that may be greater than the original wishes of either; and by continuous, direct and purposeful search for bodies of knowledge which may contribute to social education and to reform and change when needed.

To my mind, "flexible imagination," a phrase of George Eliot's, describes one of the most important qualities of mind for the worker who would know the mind of her client—a capacity for setting aside for the moment that with which one's own mind may be filled and being receptive to many possibilities; a capacity for perceiving many possible alternatives, and for loving a great many kinds of people, if only they're good of their kind. What I mean is best illustrated, perhaps, by a positive and a negative example, taken from what one might suppose to be the somewhat unlikely field of work for the aged poor in almshouses.

Did you ever read George Eliot's *Scenes from Clerical Life*? If you have, you remember the Sunday morning that the Reverend Amos Barton went to the almshouse to preach to paupers, and chose for his subject "the unleavened bread." After the service, when the inmates were trying to get their personal needs before him, an old woman named Mrs. Brick managed to catch his attention with her empty snuff-box. George Eliot remarks, "I cannot help thinking that if Mr. Barton had shaken into that little box a small portion of Scotch highdried [snuff], he might have produced something more like an amiable emotion in Mrs. Brick's mind than anything that she had felt under this morning's exposition of the unleavened bread." What Mr. Barton actually said was: "Ah, well, you'll soon be going where there's no more snuff. You'll be in need of mercy then. You must remember that you may have to seek for mercy and not find it, just as you're seeking for snuff." Then comes the sentence that is significant for us. "At the first sentence of this admonition," George Eliot goes on, "the twinkle subsided in Mrs. Brick's eyes, the lid of her box went click, and her heart was shut up at the same moment."

I quote this tiny incident for two reasons: for the sake of that sentence with the indisputable evidence of what happened in Mrs.

Brick's mind, to which Amos Barton was blind; and also for the author's later comment which contains a generalization important for social case workers on flexible imagination:

To have any chance of success short of miraculous intervention, he (a man in Amos Barton's position) must have some approximate conception of the mode in which the doctrines that have so much vitality in his own brain will comport themselves in a brain that is neither geographical nor chronological nor exegetical. It is a flexible imagination that can take such a leap as that and an adroit tongue that can adapt its speech to so unfamiliar a position.

I want to match up this negative example by one or two positive ones, from the more recent experiences of Francis Bardwell, the present Inspector of Almshouses for the State of Massachusetts. I read the preceding paragraph to Mr. Bardwell over the telephone, asked him to give me a modern instance, and presently received the following:

What you refer to I had always been pleased to call the "angle of approach,"—one of the most important things in personal contact with dependent people.

Here is an episode about Aunt Anne, who wanted to be "took care of." I had been sent for because Aunt Anne had refused to do any longer the little tasks required of her at the almshouse, and had retired to her room, putting on her only best dress—a black alpaca made in the seventies. There came the expected knock, and she bowed with serenity as the caller came in. From a formal and dignified attitude she deflected not one iota. In state, best dress as an armor for aged dignity, she received her caller.

"My, but you're dressed up, Aunt Anne." "Yes, from now on I'm always going to be." "No more help?" the caller queried. "No." The monosyllable was snapped out. "Is this fair?" "Yes, and ain't it time? How long should a body work? Is there never to be a time for rest and for best alpacas? If I'm to rest here, it must be from now on." This was delivered severely and in measured tones. She wouldn't weaken, although she began to wonder at the courage she had somehow acquired: she would see it through. "You're too young to quit, Aunt Anne. Just a few years longer—a little help here in hard places—and then the best dress and folded hands." "Go on!" she taunted, "the best dress and folded hands and a handful of people saying 'Her smile is natural.' Oh, I've heard it, many funerals where I've helped. Perhaps you don't know it—you haven't looked me up in the book; if you had you would have known I should have quit years ago. I know I don't look my age. Stout folks seldom do, after seventy, but I'm eighty-four. Isn't it time I quit? If I'm ever to sit and rock and rest, isn't it from now on? Fourteen years I'm living on borrowed time, so I'm through." She paused, looked out of the window, saw the near lying meadow and beyond, the low Cape hills. A tear welled to her eye and slowly rolled down her withered cheek. The spirit of revolt was gone; she was in retreat; she was a woman again, and wept. With an effort she controlled her emotions, and quite calmly said, "I want to be took care of, only that." The caller said, "Tell me all about it, Aunt Anne," and laid a kindly hand upon her shoulder.

Then followed the complete unfolding of the story of her life: how through her childhood she had tended her mother's children, then her own

children, then her children's children, finally doing tasks in the almshouse because her loyal children had died, and her disloyal ones neglected her. As you can imagine, she was given the chance she craved, even finally to the ambition of her lifetime, being waited on in her bed by a nurse in a cap.

Mr. Bardwell then added a quotation from his story, "Raising Dates."

Timothy had demanded an audience. Timothy evidently had a grievance, the nature of which, however, I could not fathom. So when I stepped into the smoking-room for my audience, I found Mr. Murphy alone, occupying an armchair, and evidently in an anticipatory mood. I resolved to confine myself to the strict language of diplomacy, so at the door I stood and bowed, saying: "Mr. Timothy Murphy, I presume?" "Your presume is right," was the answer. "Oh," I replied, "I'm pleased to renew an acquaintance," and shook hands. "You may not be so pleased when I'm through with you." "I understand, Mr. Murphy, you have a bone to pick with me, and I'm hoping it's only a chicken bone." "'Tis not! 'tis the hind leg of an elephant." "Oh, I'm relieved (you will notice my use of the language of diplomacy), for it might have been the wishbone of a mastodon." "Never mind all that, 'tis a big bone. If I knew my geography as well as you do, I'd be back at you with a dragon's backbone, but that's neither here nor there." "Well?" I questioned, resolving to let him state his own case in his own way. The old man shuffled his feet, twitched his hands on the arms of his chair, cleared his throat and began: "Do I look like a man who raises dates? I ask you that, man to man, do I?" "No," I answered deliberately, "you do not look like a man who raises dates. If anyone had asked me what was your specialty, I should have suggested something tropical, but not dates, even if dates are raised in hot climates," and so on.

The plot of this story, which will, I hope, presently be published with others from Mr. Bardwell's pen, all hinges on an unfortunate misunderstanding of the expression *raison d'etre*! Mr. Bardwell's own comment on these two cases is as follows:

You will see the entirely different angle of approach in these two cases. I could not have used the language of diplomacy with Aunt Anne; it would have been an insult. Timothy expected it; a dignified hearing, with its humorous side patent to both of us, and only touched on in by-play—and my man was Irish. Aunt Anne was Yankee to the uttermost generation.

Mr. Bardwell gives you, as no one else can, a sense of the possibilities of give-and-take in ordinary conversation.

Next I might put the importance of a light touch, of being, in a sense, non-shockable: at least of not being shocked in advance. I asked a college student, who had a serious and complex problem about which it was important to consult various social workers and professional people, why he wished to see each one himself before he took his client to see them. He explained that one didn't wish to subject a person in trouble to the experience of

encountering those who straighten their lips and take things too seriously. Closed lips give a sense that the sufferer justly or unjustly conceives of himself as in competition with a mind closed against him.

There are other aspects of being non-shockable. A doctor called in a priest to see a man who refused to have his crushed leg amputated, although it would probably save his life. The doctor in his disgust threw off the sheet and exclaimed to the priest, "This is what this man wants to save." The priest fainted. But when he recovered, in reply to the doctor's apology for roughness he only lifted the sheet again, for himself this time, saying, "It is my business to face such things without fainting."

I want to say a word or two about the significance of finding and building on the strength rather than on the weaknesses of human nature. It may be necessary to face the negative facts, but the positive ones are the ones we actually work with if anything happens. The habit of searching for and observing the positive as well as the negative in the smallest details of our study of personalities or fortunes or relationships is fundamental. There is an apocryphal story of Christ and the disciples passing a dead dog, which gives the spirit of what I mean. The disciples shuddered and turned aside. Christ went up to the dead animal and called the others, saying: "Come and see what beautiful teeth the creature hath."

I wish to make a stand, too, against abuse of power, against the exercise of the whipland, in fact, against the use of force of any kind except the forces of expertness and authority. Even the forces of expertness and authority have the greatest value when employed on the give-and-take basis. When the give-and-take basis has proved impossible, and if conflict there must be, it is still possible to look closely at the terms of conflict and have at least a basis of clear understanding on both sides. Only in a limited range of cases, on lines to be clearly and definitely defined, does one (for the sake of those who are dependent or weaker) do other than work with the individual himself. The greatest skill of all lies, perhaps, in knowing when to postpone the use of even the force of authority, and how to apply that force well when used.

I like to remember in this connection two short lines of the philosopher and poet:

Of all wit's uses the main one
Is to live well with who has none.

Now I should like to speak of relating the situation to some vital concept of life and of social work which may be more peculiarly characteristic of the point of view I am suggesting. First in this group I wish to put high expectations. After holding one's mind open to receive a pure impression of another's point of view, it is equally important to share one's own. Anything less than holding another person to the same purposes to which one holds one's self is no compliment. There are two dangers: First, the curse of classification, for when classification is premature, or permanent, or one-sided, it seems to go with a certain lowering or levelling of standards of expectation. If I speak with undue warmth of this evil of being classified in another's mind—a disaster second only to the evil of being classified in one's own mind—it is because I have, for many years, seen so much harm done by this process to blind individuals and to groups of the blind. The second point of failure to maintain high expectations lies in helping people toward the evasion of their own realities, which they might be helped to see as an immediate challenge rather than as a thing to be evaded were it not that the worker lowers her standards, presumably, to meet theirs.

The positive side of this attitude toward life sees any situation, hard as it may be, as a challenge; and to those who have the element of the mystic in their makeup much more, as is suggested by Francis Thompson's "The Kingdom of God":

The drift of pinions, would we hearken,
Beats at our own clay-shuttered doors.

The angels keep their ancient places;
Turn but a stone, and start a wing!
'Tis ye, 'tis your estrangèd faces,
That miss the many-splendoured thing.

This is the transforming attitude: and one of the strangest things about attitudes is that people (even adults) may give them to each other. The best work of the best parents in this way is often done with their children before twelve years of age. Adult education for those who desire it is equally possible and approached in a similar way.

A settlement worker brought to a study group to which I belonged this winter an interesting example.

A woman whom she had known for more than twenty years and whom she had always believed to be a "good sport," although she lived under conditions unfavorable to convincing herself and others that she was, at the age of fifty was helped to discover what her powers were and was able permanently to revolutionize her attitude toward her own difficult home conditions. The family situation was one in which there was a bread-winner physically handicapped by an industrial accident; a good workman but of reduced initiative and a heavy drinker. There were five children, and this good mother, whose virtues were, however, easily forgotten, had kicked against the pricks so long that she had become a chronic complainer. The transformation came about through the simple event of a visit to a summer camp under conditions of bad weather and much complaining on the part of other people. This mother, however, showed herself to be such a good sport and to have such appreciation and enjoyment of Nature under all conditions, that she convinced herself as well as others of her powers. She returned to her own home, rested from her family and they from her, and put her new-found powers to the stern test of several years' trial before her experiences were written out.

The worker who wished to bring this story to the study group first submitted it to Mrs. Ryan, who gave her ready consent to having it used as written. This final point also illustrates a principle in which I believe strongly—that people under all sorts of circumstances, of both success and failure, when the time comes truly to evaluate their experiences, are wholly glad if any experience of theirs can be made use of by others. Our slip-ups in social case work are apt, I think, to be the result of too early use of experiences still in process and experiences interpreted in terms of technique rather than in terms of the lives of the individuals in question.

Defining and coming to an understanding as to common purposes in a given instance is of importance to the worker as well as to the client.

In discussing the case of Matthew Donnelly in the study group this winter, we came through an astonishing array of ethical questions to the very simple conclusion that this difficult family problem, whatever we thought of it, rested as a matter of fact upon the attitude of the wife and was truly settled by her attitude. This was what might be called, in terms of social case work, a family problem in which the bread-winner was present and the family handicapped by its alcoholic tendencies and irresponsible traits.

Mr. Donnelly had a fine wife and beautiful children but through him the economic situation was always difficult and the cost of the struggle to the wife and children very great. It was small wonder that the first worker thought, as a short cut, of breaking up the family. Nothing but a different concept of social case work could have saved her from this decision. She reckoned, however, without Mrs. Matthew Donnelly, an able and charming person, who didn't think of Matthew as an irresponsible alcoholic bread-winner. He was in fact a lovable though inconvenient person and in many ways a good father. Mrs. Donnelly was a woman who had a lively religious faith which sustained her in her position, and she was capable of coming through her trials with spirit undimmed. When a worker came along who could evaluate and work with this power over a long period of time, and work with Matthew too, on the basis of a clear understanding that if he kept up his end she would keep up hers in helping out his wife and children and helping him to pay off his debts, Matthew eventually made good.

But this case, although so well worked out and recorded, laid no emphasis on the central fact that the attitude of Mrs. Donnelly was the one great positive element and source of power in the situation. We so instinctively record and interpret exclusively the difficulties to be faced and our own efforts to meet them, that we often lose sight of and fail to record the attitudes of the human beings before us. What records are records of comes back inevitably to one's concept of social case work. When Dr. Wm. Healy made "own story" a part of his work with and record of the individual delinquent he incorporated this principal into case work with individuals to stay, I hope, forever.

So much for making the most of case work in the lives of client and worker; but this is not enough. Social case work is also a means of search and discovery in which client and worker jointly share. I choose the point of view of social case work as a subhead under the art of living under the laws of life common to all of us, because it seems to shake the subject into some sort of perspective. We all become human beings, ignorant, to be sure, but filled with a common desire to understand more about this business of life in which we are all engaged. The most astonishing thing in years of social work continues to be the response of all sorts and conditions of men and women to this idea, important because it opens up possibilities of gathering not only bodies of knowledge about people's behavior, but also bodies of knowledge about states of mind.

Bodies of knowledge as to backgrounds of individuals and groups, of a kind that influence the attitude of workers, are rather rare. In my experience they are best illustrated by the type of work done by Miss Hull in studying Sicilian backgrounds and, on a larger scale, by *Old World Traits Transplanted* (Park and Miller) in the series of "Studies in Methods of Americanization" edited by Allen T. Burns.

There are already recorded and unrecorded evidences of great variety in different fields of work, in Massachusetts alone, which bear out the recognition of states of mind as basic to plans of action. Dr. Walter Fernald's recognition of the desire for approbation of others in many of the feeble-minded has led to a special education which develops self-respect through a well-grounded sense of usefulness to others. Dr. John E. Fish of the Hospital

School for Crippled Children, knowing that it is the attitude of mind of the cripple which determines his career, bases the plan of life and education for crippled children under medical care on this fact. When Mrs. Hodder asks you to postpone visiting the Reformatory for Women with a class of students until she has had a chance to consult the prisoners about such visits in general and reminds you that it might be fairer to judge of them on a single occasion by seeing them in a performance of *Iolanthe*, you know upon what principle she is basing her plans of action. Mrs. Chesley's new little book, *Who are the Benefactors?* is a recognition of other than economic values in the lives of human beings, shown in attitudes toward life that enrich the lives of all with whom they come in contact. Carleton Parker's studies of casual laborers suggest the direction in which studies of states of mind of groups in the community might move on a larger scale.

When I had finished this paper and shown it to Dr. Cabot, he remarked: "Attitude, then, is the expressed juice and essence of one's experience, religion or philosophy; what one has not forgotten; what is genuine and not wordy."

Perhaps I have only taken a long way of saying that treatment of personality actually occurs only in proportion as worker and client accomplish that give-and-take in points of view upon which human understandings depend.

We arrive at these understandings not when we think of life in terms of social case work but when we think of social case work in terms of life.

A STUDY OF SOCIAL TREATMENT¹

PORTER R. LEE

A GROUP of case workers would probably agree that treatment—that part of the process directed toward the re-establishment of a client as a self-maintaining person—is the most important factor in social case work. In a sense, of course, every step in the case work process is directed toward this end; and it is true also that many of the most important concrete steps in treatment itself are taken during the process of investigation. We may, however, properly narrow a discussion of treatment to those steps which are taken with some specific treatment purpose in mind. Treatment presupposes an adequate investigation, a diagnosis, and a plan, all of which we will take for granted. We are concerned rather with the task faced by the case worker after these preliminaries have been accomplished.

Before analyzing that task it will be helpful to consider some of the factors which impose a limitation upon successful treatment:

(1) The element of time: Most case work agencies are over-worked and most case workers have insufficient time for the quality of work on all cases of which they are capable.

(2) The facilities with which we have to work: These include the entire range of social resources of the community—agencies, services, privileges, laws, and so on—of every conceivable kind. Under this heading, also, might be included the general public understanding of social case work which to a certain extent determines the standards of work permitted in the community.

(3) The degree of responsiveness shown by clients: Lack of responsiveness may be due to defective intelligence, to willfulness, to distrust, or to any one of a number of factors. The degree to which responsiveness exists determines to a considerable extent the quality of the case work.

(4) The status of scientific knowledge of human personality, of our social environment, and of their inter-play: We have still much to learn about ourselves and about the environment in which

¹ From *The Family*, December, 1923.

we live—both the natural environment which was created for us and the social environment which we have largely created for ourselves. In so far as successful treatment depends upon accurate knowledge, it will be limited by the extent to which that knowledge has been revealed to us.

(5) The equipment of case workers themselves: Social treatment will be no better than the conception of its possibilities held by those who practice it. It will be no better than the possibilities of the trained equipment which we bring to it. Ideally this equipment would include the qualities with which we were born plus that part of the experience and scientific knowledge of the human race which bears upon the problem of human relationships.

If we scrutinize this list of limitations, it will become clear that they are in differing degree subject to the control of the case worker. The element of time is at present controllable by the case worker only to a limited extent. This is also true of the facilities with which he works. Both of these factors are dependent upon the money available for the support of case work, upon the intelligence of the community, and its interest in case work, and upon the efficiency of case work organizations for which case workers themselves are not usually fully responsible.

When we come to the responsiveness of the client, we have another factor which is frequently, if not usually, beyond the control of the case worker; but we have a good deal of evidence that a well equipped case worker can secure a greater degree of responsiveness from clients than used to be thought possible. In the equipment of the case worker and the availability of scientific knowledge, we have two factors well within the control of the case worker (at least in the sense that no one else is likely to contribute to their control in anything like the same degree). New knowledge about human beings and their problems, of the kind that can be used by social case workers, must in the future be carved largely, if not chiefly, out of the experience of case workers themselves. The organization of this knowledge into serviceable equipment for social treatment must also be made by case workers themselves.

Of these five possible limitations upon the quality of social treatment, then, three are largely within the control of social case workers. It would therefore seem that the study of social treat-

ment on the one hand and the study of the equipment of social workers on the other are the two most promising leads for us in our attempt to discover how the quality of social treatment can be improved.

The Task of Social Treatment

Just what do we do in social case work when we follow through a program of treatment? I have looked through a number of case records for treatment items which might give concreteness to our discussion. From five such case records I have taken the following items, all of which, clearly, are parts of social treatment. I have used the language of the case record, but for convenience in discussion will divide the items into two groups—my choosing, not that of the case workers:

Group I:

- The boy should be transferred to another school.
- Get the boy into a Boy Scout Troop.
- The girl should be sent to a camp this summer.
- The boy's adenoids should be removed.
- The family should be moved to more suitable rooms.
- The boy's teeth should be attended to.
- The girl needs treatment to correct a defective vision.
- Arrange for vacations for children in the country after school closes.
- Secure pension for the family.
- Establish the boy in a paper route.
- Secure library privileges for the child.

Group II:

Some plan should be worked out whereby the mother may have opportunity for contact socially with other women and thus be removed from isolation.

Gradually raise household standards.

He should receive a certain amount of intelligent discipline.

With fairly close supervision and with help from his mother the progress can be accomplished.

The attitude of the parents toward the boy must be changed.

An effort should be made to render the home more receptive to medical advice.

The psychological attitude of the household must be improved and if the boy's assistance is indispensable, it must be gained through a more co-operative spirit and not be left entirely to mere compulsion.

The school must be made to see . . .

Father's interest should be secured so he will work with the mother in training the children and gaining their confidence.

The child should be given the right type of companionship.

Get the mother to realize the danger in her attitude that the boy is necessarily going to follow in his father's footsteps.

With repeated constructive explanations and understanding supervision, the outlook is moderately good.

The boy's confidence should be won.

Parents should observe the child more closely at home and supervise him carefully.

The mere reading of these two groups is probably enough to make clear a great difference in the tasks which they respectively present to the case worker. Let us for convenience in this discussion call Group I the *executive aspect* of social treatment, because it involves chiefly the discovery of a particular resource and arranges for its use; and let us call Group II the *leadership aspect* of treatment because it involves primarily not the use of other resources but the influence of the personality of the worker. Both are executive, both are leadership; but the executive aspects of treatment seem to me more outstanding in the first group, and the leadership aspects more outstanding in the second.

The Executive Aspects of Treatment

It is in the executive aspects of treatment that we have thus far achieved our most numerous successes. Thirty years ago in this country family case work agencies were struggling to get their communities to accept the philosophy that the best form of charity was to "help the poor to help themselves." In applying that philosophy concretely annual reports, letters of appeal, public addresses, and other forms of educational effort talked about material relief as a wholly inadequate solution for the problem of the poor. They emphasized finding jobs, providing medical treatment for the sick members of the family, keeping children in school, moving families to better housing conditions, forcing non-supporters to support their families, and so on through a list of items very like those which we have included in Group I. Attention to these matters is still an important part of treatment. With the rapid increase in the number of community facilities—medical clinics, psychiatric and psychological clinics, special classes in the public schools, laws for the protection of deserted families, facilities for recreation, and so on—it is possible now to organize programs of treatment for disorganized families which include far more of these tangible benefits than was possible thirty years ago.

A reading of case records, however, leaves the feeling that even with respect to this aspect of treatment we do not take full

advantage of the facilities which American communities offer. The quality of social treatment on this executive side depends largely upon the resourcefulness of case workers themselves. It requires in the first place an alertness to the varied needs of a family. It is easy to think of treatment in terms of certain routine possibilities: insistence upon children's going to school, attention to obvious physical needs, housing conditions, and so on. Beyond these rather obvious needs, which every case worker has schooled herself to look for, lie others which are only apparent to one who is alert and whose conception of treatment is as broad as human need and as specific as the entire range of community resources. Miss Richmond once suggested that a wholesome practice for case workers would be to consider occasionally what sources of information they most habitually use in making investigations, in order to discover whether they were tending to omit certain sources of information because through less frequent use they went more or less out of mind. She mentions one group of case workers who discovered by this process that they were consistently neglecting teachers and former employers. An equally wholesome exercise for case workers would be to study the whole list of social resources in the community to see which of them they have infrequently or never used. I have recently heard psychiatric social workers attach considerable importance to the use of the public library by children in need of recreation. If the library can be an important agent in bringing about readjustment for a child who presents mental difficulties, might it not be an equally effective treatment resource with children who present other social problems?

The discussion of ways and means whereby the executive aspects of treatment can be more effectively organized could be continued for an indefinite time. I wish to leave it at this point, not because we have exhausted it but because this aspect of treatment at present is much more effectively handled than the other.

Leadership Aspects of Treatment

Dipping for a moment into the history of social case work we will find that thirty years ago family case work agencies were urging not merely that certain objective difficulties in the way

of self-help be removed, but that we recognize the importance of the personal element, through the medium of which stimulus, encouragement, and hope might be imparted to lives made dreary by poverty. This sort of case work, carried on largely through the medium of friendly visiting, but also through the personal contacts of professional case workers, was an emphasis upon the leadership aspect of treatment. The psychological problem of treatment is at the heart of all good social case work. Over and over again, the kernel of our problem is the changing of an attitude—an attitude in a client, an attitude in a possible co-operator, an attitude in the case worker herself. How does one go to work to change an attitude? Following the phraseology of our second group of items, how is a boy's confidence won? What does "fairly close supervision" mean? How does one "get the mother to realize the danger in her attitude"? How is the attitude of parents toward a boy changed? How can a "home be made more receptive to medical" or any other kind of advice? How can a "school be made to see"?

When one discusses the possibility of developing in social case workers or others the power of influencing other human beings, the capacity to draw out the best in others, the gift of human leadership, one is likely to be met with the comment that these are qualities that cannot be acquired; one has them if one is born with them; some people are just naturally effective in their human relations and some are not; the gift of dealing helpfully with human beings cannot be taught. My answer to this is two-fold: First, in schools, in medical practice, in social case work, every day the highest form of professional skill is being wasted because those who practice it are limited in their gift for ordinary human relationships. In social case work sound plans of treatment developed after highly skillful diagnosis, based upon facts secured in the most complicated investigations, are failing because fundamental in those plans is the problem of changing human attitudes, and in the task of changing human attitudes we have thus far been left to our own devices. The race has almost never studied its own experience in order to put the lessons of that experience at the disposal of those who wish to learn how to deal helpfully with others. Second, we may agree

that if one has not been born with the gift of human leadership he cannot acquire it. The plain fact, however, is that, left to our own devices, some of us social case workers have grown in the art of human relationships. We are better case workers at the age of thirty than we were at twenty, at forty than we were at thirty, at fifty than we were at forty, and so on to the end of our days. This growth has been due to an ability to profit by our own experiences, plus an ability to benefit by observing good examples. In a very real sense every case worker who has developed the art of leadership, who has developed a facility in changing attitudes, has achieved this through learning how to practice the art. That which can be learned can be taught, once we discover the method and secure the organized subject matter of instruction. At present, with respect to this most important aspect of social treatment, we have neither the method nor the organization of the subject matter. We have the experience, however, which, if properly studied, would make the task easier. Take, for instance, the subject matter in the following:

Here is a family consisting of a mother who drinks but in spite of this supports herself and her son aged twelve. Her husband has deserted her. There is no positive evidence of immorality on her part but she has a number of men friends who spend a good deal of time with her, and the meagerness of the home equipment is such that neighbors and others do not hesitate to gossip about the impropriety of her conduct. On one occasion the attention of the S.P.C.C. was called to the situation, but they could find no basis upon which they could take legal action against her. Twice when out of work she had to appeal for charitable assistance.

All of this has had an effect upon her somewhat sensitive son, who is ashamed of his home life, who resents the influence of several of his mother's friends over her, thinking them responsible for her drinking habits, and who in consequence is having some trouble with his work at school. The principal of the school has tried to discipline the boy, and, with a real sympathy for his difficulties, has tried to get the mother to see the desirability of a different way of living. One or two other social agencies at one time or another have been concerned with this family situation. From the mother's point of view none of them has been helpful. She has reached the point where she is hostile to the approach of any social worker. The boy, whose pride has been deeply touched, shares his mother's feeling to some extent. The matter comes to the attention of an organization interested in family case work, which, after a brief contact, realizes the difficulties but would like if possible, in the interest of the boy particularly, to accomplish something. They finally define their procedure for the moment as follows (and this I take it is really the formulation of a step in treatment)—“get the boy's confidence.”

Suppose the case worker entrusted with the carrying out of this decision finds on her calendar this item, “get the boy's con-

fidence," and, with respect to other active cases, other items such as, "secure widow's pension for Mrs. A," "arrange a summer camp for Lucy B," "find a job if possible for Mrs. D." With respect to the last three items, the case worker would find in the slowly growing body of technical literature in our field a substantial number of suggestions. The policies of her organization would afford still more. In her own experience she has learned how to itemize the procedure involved in every one of those tasks. But where will she find concrete suggestions in the matter of winning the boy's confidence? How *does* one win confidence? In my judgment there is no greater problem before us as case workers than the problem of defining this task of leadership—which is the task of winning confidence and changing attitudes. It is a problem of discovering methods used by human beings when they succeed in this task. It is an elusive problem and its solution is no less so. It is no more elusive, however, than was the problem of measuring human intelligence, with which psychologists have made amazing progress. We may admit its difficulties and yet not shrink from the task of finding a solution. I believe that its solution lies in the hands of social case workers. Certainly their experience is one of outstanding success in solving the problem in case after case. What we need to do is to make available to ourselves the significant factors in this success. I wish to suggest a method of study which seems to me to promise progress in this direction.

The Study of Leadership

The subject matter for a study of the art of changing human attitudes must be found in the achievements of social case workers. In so far as this is being done at the present time, they are doing it. Every one of them has at some time or other gone beyond the executive aspects of treatment and won an outstanding success in reconstructing the point of view or changing the attitude of a client. Where is the record of it? The case record in such an instance gives the results of their work. It does not tell how it was done. What we need to do is to get behind the results of such efforts in order to see the effort itself. We need not only the recital of the steps the case worker took, which

are desired by her organization for its case record; we need the revelation of her thinking, of her ingenuity, of her understanding, as she would talk about these to an intimate friend who believed in her and to whom she was willing to confide without fear of being called conceited. The record of a substantially successful piece of case work read by another case worker would stand out as the record of an achievement which could only have been done by a skilled person. But the nature of the skill, the subtle ways in which it showed itself, the alternatives which it considered and rejected before finding the right one in each of the recurring crises that make up successful case work, the record does not reveal. And yet this aspect of social case work must be revealed if we are to make progress in the leadership which is the foundation of successful work.

Let us contrast the bare statements in a given case record with the revelation of skill which is possible when case workers begin talking about the way they deal with their clients.

Mrs. Mary Parsons, a woman of thirty, called at the office of a children's agency to ask for help in finding a home for a five-year-old boy whom she had adopted three years before. Mrs. Parsons was a woman of refinement and education, dignified and courteous, giving an impression of self-confidence and a commendable independence of judgment. She stated that she had been ill with tuberculosis for some time, had been advised by her physician that she was going to die, and that she wished to find a home for the boy, to whom she was deeply attached, before she became too ill to attend to the matter personally. She lived in a small community but had come to this city because she thought the range of choice in homes for the boy would be greater.

In the case record the first interview contains only one sentence which refers to Mrs. Parson's physical condition:

Mr. Parsons died of tuberculosis and before Mrs. Parsons left her home town, a specialist told her that both her lungs were badly diseased and that there was no hope for her recovery.

As one reads on in the case record, it is quite apparent that this case worker, sensing the attachment between Mrs. Parsons and the boy, was loath to be a party to the separation of the two unless it were absolutely necessary. She felt that she wanted to satisfy herself regarding Mrs. Parsons' physical condition before she took any such step. Probably any good case worker would have felt the same way. We are not surprised, therefore, when the case record states under a date two days after the first interview:

Visitor called on Mrs. Parsons at the home of her cousin, Mrs. Rankin, to suggest a temporary placement of Edward with Mr. Donnison, who had asked for a boy about his age. Visitor talked with Mrs. Parsons alone. She does not want to place Edward temporarily as she feels her mother can care for him for the present and she does not want him to have to get used to two new homes. Mrs. Parsons promised to consider going to the tuberculosis clinic and said she would let the visitor know about this.

If we were studying this case record for evidences of skill in social treatment on the part of the case worker we would be justified at this point in finding one in Mrs. Parsons' promise to consider going to a clinic for examination. What happened between these two interviews, so briefly recorded? When one considers the impression of self-confidence made by Mrs. Parsons, the evident fact that she was used to making her own decisions, it occurs to one that here was an illustration of an attitude which has begun to be changed. If we could follow the reasoning of the case worker during the first interview and through the two days following, as she thought about Mrs. Parsons, possibly we should have an interesting revelation of the way in which human leadership functions. We can visualize this to a limited extent, but not completely, for this was a modest case worker and she wrote only a sketchy story of her work. From the whole story, which she wrote on request, I have taken the following statements which have a bearing upon Mrs. Parsons' decision:

Mrs. Parsons impressed the case worker immediately as being an unusually high type of woman, one who was accustomed to making her own plans and capable of doing so. She said her husband had died of tuberculosis and that before leaving her small home town a tuberculosis specialist had told her both her lungs were badly affected with the disease and there was no hope for her recovery. She had confidence in this doctor. . . . She had no doubt but that she was going to die soon. . . . She had resigned herself to the separation by thinking of the opportunities which might be given Edward in a good home.

The case worker soon saw that suggestions about further medical attention or the possibility of somehow making plans whereby the family could be kept together were not welcome. Mrs. Parsons was courteous in her manner, but she made it perfectly plain in her nice way that she had not come to our office for advice in making her decision or as to what course to follow. She had fought out all that with herself and was only asking us to provide, if we could, the necessary adoption home. The case worker therefore talked only about the possibilities of our helping with this plan.

We felt very much concerned about Mrs. Parsons' health and were anxious to be able to establish a friendly basis on which to talk with her further about it. She had insisted that Edward was not affected with the disease, and it had not seemed wise at the time to insist that he have an examination for tuberculosis until we were sure of being able to place him in case he was o.k. physically. We had on our lists, however, a family

who would take a small boy free, temporarily. So, in a couple of days the case worker called on Mrs. Parsons, at the cousin's home, with this suggestion as an excuse. She was able to talk with Mrs. Parsons alone and in a more confidential manner than at the office. Mrs. Parsons did not care to have Edward taken care of temporarily. However, during the conversation the worker found it possible to talk about a tuberculosis specialist in whom the community had a great deal of confidence. She offered to take Mrs. Parsons to him at the clinic, if she would consent to go, so that she might receive any treatment which was possible. Mrs. Parsons hesitated to consider this plan as she felt she was beyond help and "knew" that very little could be done for her trouble in this advanced stage. After the visitor had given her an account of the pleasant experiences a friend of hers had had at the County Tuberculosis Hospital as a pay patient, however, Mrs. Parsons grew more interested. It was evident that, although she had no hope whatever of her own recovery, she did regret being dependent on her relatives, and the possibility of being taken care of in a respectable way elsewhere was attractive. She promised to think about this plan for herself and to let the worker know her decision.

Mrs. Parsons went to a clinic for examination. The physician told her that she had a good chance to make a fair recovery. After some skillful work by the case worker, Mrs. Parsons was willing to accept the physician's judgment and to go to a sanitarium for treatment, although she felt that the result was still so uncertain as to make it wise for her to carry out her plan to give up Edward. At this point in the case record itself is the following entry:

Mrs. Parsons told visitor about the diagnosis which the doctor had made of her case. She is very happy and is planning to be ready to go to Hillcrest next week. Visitor asked that she come to the office to talk about plans for Edward. Later: Mrs. Parsons in office. Visitor persuaded her to keep Edward.

"Visitor persuaded her to keep Edward" is another of those brief entries in the record behind which there seems to be a story. Here again the case worker has done less than justice to herself, but her annotation gives us much more of an understanding than the record does of the way in which Mrs. Parsons was persuaded to keep Edward.

The worker now had a basis on which to talk to Mrs. Parsons about other plans for Edward than those she had decided upon. She found that Mrs. Parsons, even with the hope of recovery, had steeled herself to the decision that Edward must have a better home than she would be able to offer him. After much persuasion, however, the worker succeeded in convincing Mrs. Parsons that the love which she and her mother could give the boy after all were worth more than anything else, and that this love would be sufficient to inspire Edward to provide for himself opportunities for the best preparation for life. The visitor went into the whole problem of the value of responsibility and a certain amount of hardship in training for

life, if there is a true incentive of love backing up youth. Mrs. Parsons was glad to accept this theory once she was convinced it was sound, and rejoiced greatly in the anticipation of keeping Edward and having this incentive to drive her in her fight for health.

We have before us only two of the outstanding incidents in this case story. If we were to analyze the story, however, not from the case record but from the case worker's frank narrative of the way in which she went at this task, we should be able to put our fingers upon a number of respects in which the case worker showed undoubted skill in leadership. Some of them are worth mentioning:

(1) As a case worker she sensed at the outset that her problem was more than finding a home for the five-year-old boy. She must somehow win her way past Mrs. Parsons' decision and reticence to the point where she could get for Mrs. Parsons the best possible medical advice. She did not, however, speak about this objective as soon as it came to mind. She waited until the opportunity offered.

(2) She allowed Mrs. Parsons in the first interview to define the situation which she wished the case worker to attend to, and she conducted her whole discussion from that beginning.

(3) In the second interview, in which she persuaded Mrs. Parsons to keep Edward, she used arguments none of which could have been wholly unfamiliar to Mrs. Parsons but which apparently had a certain authority because they came from the case worker, and this in spite of the fact that the case worker had been a stranger to her less than three weeks before.

(4) It is apparent throughout this story, more so perhaps at other points than those which I have quoted, that the case worker gave Mrs. Parsons the feeling that her right to make her own decision was respected, and that her personality and judgment were being accorded full credit.

From the point of view of developing the capacity of case workers for the art of leadership, what is the significance of such an analysis as this? Certainly the four items which we have mentioned are more or less obvious, but I have found that when case workers, after analyzing the Parsons case, proceed in the same way to analyze the story that lies behind another case, and another, and another, they have been a bit startled to find that the secret of success apparently involves similar factors. For example, a moment ago I mentioned as one evidence of skill in this situation that, in the second interview quoted, Mrs. Parsons was influenced to keep Edward by the arguments of the case worker. Would these arguments have had the same authority if the case worker had used them at the beginning? Obviously not. For one reason, they were most effective coming after the doctor's prognosis. But another and stronger reason is that in the first

interview Mrs. Parsons did not recognize the case worker as an authority in anything, except perhaps in the finding of foster homes. If then, we could deduce something which looks like a principle—if we were willing to call it that (which I hope we are not)—we might say: "Don't act like an authority until your authority is recognized." This sounds like a pleasant little aphorism imposing a bit of homely philosophy, the soundness of which everyone recognizes. But when in the study of case after case one sees it functioning as an explanation of success, or the lack of it as an explanation of failure, it has an impressiveness which it lacks when it simply stares at one from the wall, where it has been tacked as a useful motto. Suppose we examine this particular suggestion a bit further. In what are case workers authorities? They are regarded by an increasing number of people, like Mrs. Parsons and other clients, as authorities with respect to the possibility of securing certain kinds of services—authorities in other words, with regard to those things which lie chiefly on the executive side of treatment. In the field of human attitudes, however, in regard to the objectives of human life, they are not regarded as authorities for the very good reason that in this field every human being is his own authority. One may accept with respect the suggestions of a physician with regard to his health, because he recognizes that the physician is authoritative in that field. One does not easily, however, take the advice of others with regard to conduct, attitudes, and purposes, because in this field the human being is traditionally his own master. This does not mean that advice in this field is never accepted but rather that it is accepted only from those whose authority in such matters we respect.

All this discussion is in the direction of a totally different kind of analysis of social treatment than we have been accustomed to make. We need to accumulate the narratives of case work like those which the case worker wrote in regard to her efforts in behalf of Mrs. Parsons. The study of such narratives would, I am convinced, reveal in time the whole art of human leadership, would make clear that human leadership, in professional work at any rate, is the more or less conscious use of certain principles of human relationship, certain ways of meeting reactions, emo-

tions, attitudes of other human beings, with which we have long been familiar but which have not been discussed, defined, studied, and made available for conscious selection. Social treatment itself we have considered as a combination of two types of effort, one of which we called executive and the other leadership. With respect to the executive aspect of treatment, improvement is relatively simple: It consists chiefly in a greater alertness on the part of social case workers to the needs of their clients and to the facilities offered by the community. It will be promoted through a somewhat better organization of the time and the effort of case workers as they are. It will also steadily improve as community facilities for treatment improve.

Improvement in the leadership aspect of treatment depends upon a more profound understanding of human relationships than we now have. It consists primarily in bringing to bear upon the problems of other personalities the resources of sympathy and understanding directed toward some definite end. Concretely, the problem takes the form of changing attitudes, winning confidence, developing a greater degree of responsiveness, or releasing a client's own powers. With all these problems, case workers have achieved outstanding success. What we lack is an analysis of that success in terms of the thinking, the ingenuity, and the resourcefulness which lie behind it, an analysis comparable to the analyses of the step in investigation, the resources, and the procedure that make up the content of treatment on the executive side.

Analysis of the leadership aspects of treatment cannot be made solely from case records. We must find our way beyond the case records into the thinking and experience of case workers themselves. This is a process in which no one can help us; this mine must be worked by our own efforts. I suggest, as a practice promising greater improvement in the quality of our case work than would follow from any other, the regular analysis by case workers themselves of the factors which have entered into their conspicuous successes and failures in human leadership.

THE INTERVIEW OF PERSUASION¹

JEAN M. LUCAS

A DISCUSSION of any phase of treatment is fraught with danger, but the discussion of interviewing is most to be dreaded. We have dismissed it again and again by saying that those who were successful had personality and those who failed had none. It has been assumed that success is heaven-sent, but if we are to maintain our contention that social workers can be trained as well as born, we must cease to be like haughty cooks whose cake is to be admired but who refuse to give recipes.

Interviewing has been considered more closely allied with investigation than treatment. It is the starting point of investigation, from its clues one follows the half-forgotten, ill-observed road into the past, but it is the medium of treatment.

There is an interview which is the key to treatment. Through it is to evolve the plan which will make each phase of treatment meaningful. Through its study we may learn some of the ways by which people are persuaded to take certain steps. Those to whom case work is a mystery constantly inquire how people are "*made* to do these things."

We are patient with such ignorance. To conceive of coercion in this age of individualism is preposterous. Yet must we not confess that most of us are guilty of "bossing" now and then? We are all loud in our condemnation of the dictatorial manner, or withholding a necessity until the wisdom of our decisions is acknowledged. But how many of us have been flattered to be told that no one else could have persuaded Mrs. A to go back to her husband? Did she return with a full realization of all the difficulties and with new wisdom and courage, or was it because Miss B was so lovely she did not want to disappoint her? How many of us have had a secret satisfaction in the suspicion that our successor will not be able to maintain a certain confidential relation? Was it a relation more founded on admiration on one side and by pity on the other than by a mutual understanding of problems and solution?

Mr. Lee has recently used the words "executive" and "leader-

¹ From *The Family*, July, 1924.

ship"² in the description of certain phases of treatment; but practically there are very few forms of treatment which permit executive impulse without unlimited leadership preceding, a leadership based on mutual purposes, established by confidence. We are all familiar with histories which record a series of memoranda, sending a man to a clinic or escorting a child to a dentist. One feels that some unseen power commands but the rationale is concealed from client and worker and is still less comprehensible to the onlooker. We know the worker who descends without notice upon a Slavish woman speaking little English, to tell her that her eight-year-old boy is to be examined within half an hour by a famous psychologist. The child, dirty and rebellious, is dragged from under a table, kicking and striking his mother, to be escorted in this defiant mood to the doctor. Of what practical value is such an examination? To be sure, it has been accomplished and can be checked on a card as a task done, but what is learned? What barriers have been built up between that child and the visitor? How inexplicable are her actions to the mother? If she had known that the doctor might help to explain why Albert found school so hard and was so difficult to discipline, would she not have been glad to have had him ready? If Albert had known that the doctor was interested in games that he might play with, how cheerfully he would have gone—and who can deny that his I.Q. would have been higher? Such treatment can be compared to a cyclone. Things happen without reason. People are seized and, after whirling about, are dropped in bewilderment if not in actual fright. More and more we realize that acts which are unrelated in the client's mind, no matter how vital and apparent to the worker, will cause ultimate defeat in treatment. These unrelated episodes become meaningful when they are seen as definite steps toward a plan evolved by the experience and imagination of the worker, modified by the desires and deep purposes of the client.

Most societies have a definite form for recording the plan of treatment, but one must read between the lines to understand its creation. A chance sentence here or there, a medical diagnosis or two, an employment reference, the opinion of indifferent relatives,

² See page 15.

and suddenly a plan. We have assumed that the roughness of the work lay largely in unsuccessful recording. We are convinced that the process has been more perfect than the record. There have been warnings from time to time that we have progressed too slowly from expert investigation to helpful treatment. Have we questioned ourselves deeply enough? We have conceded without much argument that interest drops when the investigation is complete. Who does not know the investigation that carries one along breathless only to disappear into vague, uncertain action—or a story of facts related without comment by this one or that and suddenly a plan evolved? At best we understand that through these shifting pictures the worker has learned to know her client. But often this knowledge is a phantom of her own creation, fashioned in the light of her prejudice and personality by events known chiefly by hearsay. How seldom we see an attempt to learn the meaning in terms of purposes and failures of these facts from those who have held the high ideals and suffered the disappointments. And yet no fact can stand alone. It must always be interpreted. How deeply important it is that it be interpreted by the emotional make-up of the client as well as by the experience of the worker.

The reason that Mrs. V came to America is more self-revealing than the fact that she landed in 1910. She will tell you that she came to earn a dowry so that she could return to far away Galicia to be a sought-for woman. To know that this high adventure ended when, confused in language and custom, she found refuge in marriage with a despised Slovak, unfolds a tragedy. The imminent desertion problem is illuminated by such history far more than it could be by facts from the actual marriage certificate. Nor would this background have become vivid to a constant questioning of motive. For Mrs. V could not answer. The misery of the present is so close that she has half forgotten. But suddenly in talking of her children's education she speaks resentfully of all the misery caused by her ignorant girlhood. That she should have given up all her dreams for a few hours of protection in a strange land is unbearable. An answer has been given to the listener to whom Mrs. V, ambitious and high spirited, and Mr. V, plodding and complacent, have been an unending challenge. Such questions must sing through all the dissonant facts until they are resolved by lucid explanation.

We talk of the importance of real participation on the part of the client in forming the plan. But have we asked for an interpretation of the facts from which the plan is to be evolved? Where are the interviewers through which one feels the deep, steady flow of life? The technique of investigation has taught us

to watch the direction of the current—but what hidden heart-break causes all the flurry? What staggering disillusionment has dammed the outlet? Do we only see a placid pool and never know that just beyond these waters fall with awful force? And yet it is no simple task. Words are indeed the screen created to conceal ideas. We mask ourselves from the indifference and censoring of others with exquisite care. Our part, once chosen, we play to the end relentlessly. Society expects it and makes it easy. Culture often is gaged by one's ability to evade those awkward moments when some burdened soul may flame out in rebellion. We are adept in anticipating such crises. The weather, light gossip, and, best of all, the accepted platitudes are well-known havens. But the case worker must be more than a graceful conversationalist. She must be a skilled interviewer; one who is willing to look at problems eye to eye with untroubled gaze. She must recur to these moments so aptly described as "breaks." They are just that: breaks in our hard conception of ourselves, through which the thoughtful can see us as we are. She is alert to note each fleeting vision of the hidden story and allow these inharmonious flashes to be the motif of her thinking far more than the spoken story. For there are always two stories—one, staid, and fit for publication, and the other a mad affair in which the sweetness and bitterness of actual living break every rule determined by propriety alone. It is here that our real interest lies. An understanding of the latter is the key to persuasion for, as the old wives say, "The heart will always rule the head." We are anxious to impress each other with our convictions, but we instinctively recoil from explaining how we feel. Yet none is so well disciplined that he can speak without betraying himself now and then through gusts of unexpected anger, sudden acts of affection and flashes of bitterness. Our spoken explanations adorned by these glimpses of our hidden lives are like those pages in *Through the Looking-Glass* that Alice found illegible until they were revealed by the mirror. The commonplaces of other lives become a living story when reflected by our own experience, whether vicarious or personal.

Such experience listens as an austere woman of thirty-odd sits with her sleeping child. She tells the story with stiff lips and steady eyes. She begins by saying, "You have a right to know," and continues. The baby

has no father, but she asks no odds of any one. She knows it was wrong (warding off a moral precept), but since she has made her bed she will lie in it. She would like to board the child and take work. She does not want a place with the child (warding off the panacea of "a place at service for the unmarried mother"). She has no one except a married sister—who must never know, she adds with twitching lips. The worker is apparently engrossed in the baby. "Such a lovely child to be boarded but of course you have thought of the disadvantages? It will take at least a week to find a good foster mother." A look of relief gave assent. No pressing for the facts of the child's paternity, no platitudes about one's "family being one's best friend," and the interview was ended with two women admiring a baby. It is a thoroughly workable contact yet lacking in almost all the elements demanded in an orthodox first interview. Confidence was gained by active interest in the woman's own plan, by quickly finding a common ground (admiration for the baby), and by ignoring for the moment the strain introduced by the mention of the sister. The passionate maternal love and loneliness of a soul that was grateful to a stranger for her praise of the baby struck the listener's imagination.

During a week's search for a suitable home, the full story was told. The death of both parents left two girls to provide for themselves. The younger soon married. She urged the elder to make her home with her, but unselfishly the invitation was refused. Even the weekly visits ceased shortly. A lover had appeared and the elder cut her relation with her sister without explanation. The married sister had a little suburban house in a distant city. Her husband was a good man, but one thing they didn't have—a child. A little flash of triumph came and went but it illuminated the problem. The story, reflected by experience and imagination, showed a woman contemplating a vista of humdrum years more lonely by comparison with the cozy cheer of her sister's home. Who would not snatch at romance even if a little tarnished? The baby brought real joy. Life was no longer ebbing, it was gaining new strength and meaning. To quote Miss Richmond, she had "a stake in the coming generation." Her abiding interest was in the child. The further conversation revealed how fine a woman her sister was. It had been a sacrifice to banish herself, yet it was the only thing. "I should like your sister," ventured the worker. A picture of the sister's sorrow and of the wrong done her was drawn. Yes, the worker was right, but she could never bear the humiliation of asking forgiveness. The courage of admitting a wrong and the independence of making a fresh start were outlined. Her resolve to give the baby every comfort was praised, but what about the affection she was stealing from her by her stubborn pride? What if an illness should place the baby in strange hands? A long silence. It was not the worker who suggested visiting the sister, but the baby's mother: "Perhaps you can make her understand how much I care for her even if I treated her so badly. Tell her how sweet the baby is. If she'll come to see me I'll explain everything and do whatever you both think is best."

A few weeks later, the worker had the deep satisfaction of helping the two sisters board the train for the distant city. Two years have passed. The baby is the center of three lives. Her mother is working and saving for "Mary's college."

What would have happened if the worker had announced that if the relatives' names and full addresses were not given, no further action would be taken? What if she had forced an unwilling consent to the visit? Would the results have been the same? Why did this woman change her mind? First because she

had confidence in the visitor. It was gained by immediate interest in her own plan and by avoiding all platitudes about forgiveness and how much we owe our families. These trite comments may do very well in conversation, but in an interview they rob the situation of its individuality. They create the impression that one is classifying rather than differentiating. Uncertainty in the face of ignorance is an evidence of wisdom quickly appreciated by one seeking counsel. Second, no persuasion was attempted until the chronological and emotional histories were well understood. Last, the unspoken argument was won when it was clearly shown that her deepest interest was imperilled by a stubborn refusal to square other relations with this devotion.

But most puzzling are those situations which resist all attempts at solution along traditional lines. There is a challenge. The problem is well understood and the remedy at hand, but the motive and force for solution are lacking.

Every one is agreed that Mr. G should be placed in a state hospital—except his wife. Four years he has refused to leave his bed although he complains of no illness. He lies day after day silently smoking except when his anger is aroused by the noise of the children's play. Then he becomes maniacal. The house is dirty and unkempt. The children play on the street to keep out of the way. Very little English is spoken but it is generally understood that it is Mrs. G's fear of her husband that keeps him at home. Still that does not explain her rapt attention and the vague smiles that greet his silly talk. She uses an affectionate diminutive in speaking of him. Many arguments are tried. Mr. G would be better in a hospital—but he prefers to stay at home. The children are neglected—she will try harder to care for them. Even appeals to her own personal pride and threatened well-being bring only a shrug. A worker who understands Bohemian visits. She reports that Mr. G speaks with a more cultured choice of words than Mrs. G. It is learned that Mr. G never worked in Europe but that he was the catch of the village as he sat in the green playing his violin as no one else could. He was writing an opera when he proposed to Mrs. G. She was the prettiest girl of the crowd and had refused other offers. But she did not expect him to support her and was delighted to work for them both. When he decided that America was a better market for his music, she earned the passage. The neighborhood was disgusted when he took to his bed, but Mrs. G was more tender. Such a cruel country not to appreciate Mr. G—no wonder he was discouraged! All the force of her being was used to protect him from the growing criticism. She would not consider making him unhappy by placing him in a hospital.

One day the worker found fourteen-year-old William in a vacant lot attempting to mend a broken flute. She talked with Mrs. G again. She suggested that Mr. G's talent might be hidden in the children. No music could develop in the absolute silence demanded by Mr. G. If the children were well and happy, perhaps they could overcome the world that had defeated their father and his music and their own would be known! He would be the first to want them to have every advantage if he were well. After all, sad as it was, his life was almost gone and theirs beginning.

It was a hard struggle but Mrs. G's interest had been touched. With constant reiterations of her duty to Mr. G's children, the argument was won. The day was set to take him to the hospital.

What won the day? A transfiguring of duty by interest. All Mrs. G's ideals and purposes were bound in that demented creature. Only when she saw her children chancing to partake of all that she had honored and revered in him was her attention focused on them. She had begun to be a bit discouraged about Mr. G, and the suggestion of old hopes blossoming at last through his children was forceful.

Duty as a motive is a much over-rated incentive. Even the most Puritanical of us would find it difficult to live in its arid atmosphere without the constant stimulation of our love or hate. There are people to whom it has no charm even as means to heavenly graces for which we shall be envied. Such a one was Mr. P.

The P children were a problem in themselves. They were all delicate and neurotic, but Mr. P made matters unbearable. A skilled craftsman, but more interested in experiment than production, he would stop work for weeks to try new combinations of metals. Savings would be spent and Mrs. P distractedly would punish the children indiscriminately. Chaos would ensue. Sometimes Mr. P would disappear for a day or two.

He was friendly but unimpressed by pleas to consider his duty to Mrs. P and his obligation to the children. When he succeeded he would be wealthy and would they not all share the prosperity? The effect of such vicissitudes on nervous children was painted in horrible colors by an imaginative worker. He was bored.

During one of the periodic financial crises, Mr. P himself grew frantic. It was agreed at once that the situation was desperate, but the argument proceeded without reference to duty or yielding to the temptation of reminding him that such a result had been foretold. The question of the difficulty of performing mental calculations in the midst of emotional excitement was discussed. Mr. P entered into the conversation eagerly. Mrs. P could never comprehend this. That night she had ruined his evening with a harangue about shoes for one of the children. Too bad, and yet the worker could see her point. What did the neighbors think of the children of a man who could earn such wages, being without the necessities? Perhaps they think him a braggart and unable to provide for his family. The American idea of gaging a man's ability by the advantages he gives his family is outlined and illustrated. What could be done for each of his children if he would bring in a steady income was shown. For the first time Mr. P listened to the needs of the children. At last, he conceded a mistake and the tide was turned. Work was found that would leave Saturdays free for experiment and he took it with good spirit. For two years he has kept the job and comparative peace has reigned. To be sure, this was not the result of one interview; but the gaining of Mr. P's attention in considering another viewpoint started with this contact.

The clue to the situation was discovered during an evening call. One of the musical daughters was playing and singing. Mr. P interrupted, com-

placently assuming that the visitor's entire interest was in his affairs and that she was as bored as he by domesticity.

But you say good treatment would have changed his self-centered existence. What treatment save a miracle will change the habits of thought of a middle-aged man? Mrs. P has always acquiesced in his superiority; her only rebellion occurred when financial crises arose. She was entirely content to be bullied. The success in the persuasion of Mr. P lay in an appreciation of Mr. P's ideal of himself and in presenting duty as the privilege of the successful man.

To be brief, persuasion is dependent on an appreciation of the power of personal desires and of purposes which control the direction of every act. Persuasion is possible when the distasteful and alienated things of life are consciously related to our interests. It is as if one connected the small silent wheel of an idle machine with the belt that brings power to the whole plant. The wheel moves as if by magic.

But how can we know where power lies? By thoughtful consideration of the story made up of the spoken explanations adorned by the brief glimpses of hidden purposes and interests. Often these moments of self-revealing occur during conversation, but sometimes they stand out in the process of investigation. We have an apologetic attitude toward this process. But though some of the creed may be outworn, we must not turn aside. Let us breathe new life into routine. Let us cease to be satisfied with facts and follow the footsteps of purpose into a living reconstruction of the past. A past, so revealed, illuminates the present. With such knowledge one may attempt persuasion, if it be conceived as the leading of thought to a vision of life as a whole. With such vision the immediate obstacle obscuring the horizon is easily surmounted.

AN ATTEMPT TO ARTICULATE PROCESSES¹

MARY S. BRISLEY

THANKS to Miss Richmond, the definition of the aim of case work as the "development of personality" has been pretty well accepted. The method or "systematic procedure" by which the end is attained is also more or less well defined. There is, theoretically at least, a logical and orderly progression in the way in which a case worker gains her knowledge of her client's personality and difficulties, from that building up a basis for understanding and co-operation from which to attack the problem of restoring or developing her client's self-respect, using that in turn to make him a partner in his own case treatment, so that, in the end, by the efforts of both, the client is able to achieve his "social integration." When we push back, however, to the processes, those "actions incident to the accomplishment" of that treatment which Porter Lee, in last December's *Family*,² defines as the leadership type, by which a passive subject of case work becomes an active agent, our ground is more uncertain. One is almost tempted to believe that case workers have agreed with Michael Arlen that there are no words for the action of man upon man. But must each case worker build up her own technique of treatment at the expense of her clients, helped only incidentally by examples of what has been done with no explanation of how it was accomplished; or is it only that we have not taken the time to articulate our skill?

The senior visitors of the Minneapolis Family Welfare Association have been trying to find the answer to the question during this past year. The danger of rationalization, the lack of a professional vocabulary, the constant need of qualifying statements, and the apparent impossibility of putting into words the essential quality—process—call it what you will—which accomplished the result, all made the task both baffling and exceedingly fascinating. The method of study chosen was simple. Each of the nine members selected an interview which had been successful in treatment. No other qualification was made, and an interesting variety of interviews was presented. Beginning with the moment that the

¹ From *The Family*, October, 1924.

² See page 12.

client and case worker entered each other's sphere of action, the case worker reproduced the interview and her own mental processes as exactly as possible. The group interrupted and questioned at will, forcing the victim for the day to press back for the principles on which she had acted and the processes which she had used. As the bases of her treatment emerged and were put into words which the group agreed were fairly accurate, they were jotted down, with the understanding that after all the interviews had been analyzed, the material would be gone over again. So far we have covered only three of the interviews in this second going over, so you see I am presenting decidedly raw material. No one can realize better than we who are making the study how fragmentary and tentative the results are. My justification for presenting them is that at least they are a beginning, and it is out of beginnings made in various places that the technique of case treatment will be formulated.

Each one of these precepts or statements of processes needs further study, rephrasing, and amplification. The most that I can hope to do here is to give you a bird's-eye and, I fear, kaleidoscopic view of some of the processes which nine case workers of some experience use in case treatment through the interview.

The first group of processes deals with the use of the information which the case worker has already gathered. "Know the personality of your client, either from the record or from personal contact and investigation." "Plan your interview, but keep your plan and mind flexible." "Have your facts well marshalled, using them so that the client will know that you have had them in mind and will not feel it necessary to tell them again." And "build up a basis for co-operation before presenting an important plan." Very simple and commonplace aren't they, but I wonder if many new visitors aren't trusting simply to inspiration occasionally?

"We set the stage" comes out crisply early in the analysis. Those of us who try out case work methods on our friends know the value of a seat on the river bank, or a fire, an easy chair and a cup of tea, but it was somewhat of a surprise to realize that the ability to make small adjustments in the environment was a part and (judging from the frequency with which it came to light) an

important part of the equipment of the practicing case worker. Most frequently the process appeared as the apparently random moving of a chair that the fullest use might be made of those unvocal modes of communication, the eyes and the facial expression. But the choice of the time and the place of the interview, the "getting rid of distracting influences" (here was classified the baby), and all the small social graces by which the visitor creates the desired background for the interview were included. "We establish a sympathetic atmosphere," is the way the group phrased it, "we let the client know that we are at ease and that we have time to listen and to consider." How often, I wonder, does the almost pathetically earnest young visitor defeat her purpose by sitting upright on the edge of the wrong chair and proceeding directly to the "heart of the matter"! "Be able to put yourself in the background, especially when there are two other people present or when the client is weeping or trying to regain his composure" and "wait until the client is ready to talk" are other suggestions made. The use of different tones of voice to make ourselves understood, was agreed to be important—especially, for example, employing a clear, low tone instead of opposing our shouts to an angry client's. The advice, "always relieve immediate need," is considered under "preparation," as treatment can hardly be successful if the client's whole mind is focused on his emergent needs.

On the subject of the worker's attitude and approach to the interview, the group agreed that she should "maintain a professional attitude, and guard against emotion on her own part, or at least keep her own emotion in the background." Hard and unsympathetic? Not at all. Understanding and sympathetic she must be, but freedom of emotional response is a luxury which is apt to blur her reasoning ability and submerge her judgment so that she becomes just one more pitying or impatient friend. The statements, "we never adopt a defensive attitude and are willing to discuss misapprehensions and prejudices frankly," "we avoid evasion," "we are willing to admit the possibility that we may be in error," might, if taken seriously, save bad moments for the visitor who is still laboring under the tremendous burden of the necessity for always being right; as might the suggestion that

she "assume co-operation from the client" help the over-fearful.

Given in this way, without the background of the interview and the discussion, one realizes how disjointed these statements of processes must sound, but all I can hope to do is give them as suggestions.

With the client and the visitor comfortably seated, there are other suggestions for the case worker. "Watch your client's mood and keep yourself responsive to it"; "when you come to a stone wall, recognize that fact, and do not try to break through by main force, but divert the attention by some definite action, and then use another method of approach"; "maintain a genuine respect for the personality of your client"; and then "talk your client's language." I am reminded of a southern experience. "Hollis," called a northern worker to a small boy, "how does it happen that you are not in school?" "Happen, Miss May? Happen?" The youngster's face showed blank incomprehension until the visitor, with a resolute putting away of long time habit, rephrased the question, "Hollis, how come y'all not in school?" It is not always the most perfect grammar that gets across.

The real case treatment is apt to begin with building up the client's self-respect, and here the group formulated another set of processes phrased as warnings. "Do nothing which will lower the client's self-respect"; "never humiliate him before others"; "do not put him on the defensive"; "do not use detective methods nor take advantage of your own position of authority"; "do not coerce people mentally"; and—one which some of us who are over-earnest may need—"after proving an excuse inadequate, drop the subject and do not nag."

Again one is baffled by the shortness of time and the temptation to discuss each of these precepts, as well as the experiences on which they are based.

Although each of these interviews was a decidedly serious one both to the client and the case worker, they were lightened by a genuine appreciation of the client's efforts. "Agree with the client whenever possible" was one of the processes formulated. "Show approbation, and say nice things when you can sincerely"; "pick out the favorable elements of the situation"; and "let the client know that you have a picture of him at his best."

The emotionally upset client came in for rather more than a fair share of discussion, probably because he (or she) is so frequently met and so hard to meet successfully. Ungoverned emotions are recognized enemies of self-respect, evidently, as we find such statements as "recognize the value of emotion as a driving force but do not allow it to be vented violently"; "help the client to retain his self-control, but once it is broken, let him get rid of the tension before proceeding with the interview"; "do not argue with an emotionally upset client"; "when there are indications of emotion do not attempt to get an explanation of this, but try to bring about a discussion of the main issue"; and "choose the least irritating aspect of the situation to start from."

All these deal with the honestly upset person. For the hysterical client there is other advice: "Ignore emotional reactions in a person accustomed to getting his way by them." And then "after a difficult emotional interview, help the client to make the transition back to normal things."

"Plan with the client" has become almost axiomatic in the upbuilding of self-respect. "Put the initiative up to the client whenever possible"; "give him a fair chance to make and to tell his plans"; "help him to make his own decisions and to change his own mind"; "always give him a chance to object" and "persuade the client to do everything possible for himself" were precepts enunciated here. The next was included after much discussion: "Do not allow the client to feel that you are 'inevitable,' that he has to put up with you and do as you suggest until the need for relief is past." (Here an interesting speculation comes to mind: Should clients be allowed to choose the agency and the visitor whom they wish, as they choose their physician and attorney?)

Attention was also paid to the fact that respect of others feeds self-respect. "Emphasize the importance of personal appearance"; "help the client to make the best possible impression on his relatives and friends"; make opportunities for him to build up the family's respect for him"; and "strengthen the children's respect for the parents, by having the parents make requests of them rather than asking them yourself, and by giving both parents and children opportunities to do things for the other."

The real effort of the visitor to help the client develop his own reasoning abilities and to make him a partner in his own case

treatment stood out clearly in several of the interviews. The first statement may seem the psychiatrist's job rather than the case worker's but articulates a process frequently employed by the case worker. "When we can," agreed the visitors, "we explain to the client the bases of his actions, then we try to show him the relationship and significance of factors, using facts given by the client himself." "Use your own skill to help the client analyze the situation, taking him with you step by step, helping him to use the same processes which you yourself find useful, giving him the practical benefit of your training"; "do not go any faster than your client is able to travel with you mentally (do not take up too many things in one interview)"; occasionally "think out loud to your clients" in the effort to help their mental processes along; all point to a genuine partnership of client and visitor on a democratic basis. The group further stressed the relationship by adding, "make the client understand that he is working in partnership with the visitor." As aids in this, the group suggested that we "keep the client informed of plans in detail, and make it easy for him to follow them," that we "explain frankly the possibilities in treatment," and that we "let him know that if the plan in hand does not work there will be other possibilities." This insistence on frankness is rather interesting in view of Dr. Cabot's recent article, for the study was made before the *Survey* published his thoughts on the subject.

If the interview is to be really successful in improving the client's mental processes he must be kept somewhere near to the subject in hand; but isn't there a danger of curbing his initiative if he is constantly brought back by the visitor? The study suggests here that we "watch for openings made by the client, guiding but not dominating the interview"; that "we discuss or dispose of the interest which is uppermost in the client's mind"; and that we find and "appeal to the client's dominant interest." Again I should like to stop and discuss the next point, that we "use the visual path to his understanding." Instances of the use of this process included the questioning direct from the discharge papers of one client, and the showing of the relief and the referential sheet to another and the actual figuring on paper for him of another client's most irregular income.

The emotional client's mental processes need special attention,

and in two instances a needlessly worried and fearful client was brought to a realization of the true situation by a calm recital of facts. "Meeting excuses with facts" is another way of phrasing the precept that we should not "allow the client to bluff us or think that he is doing so." We are also to "overcome defense reactions" and—a saving grace—"appeal to his sense of humor."

The social integration of the client is not of course capable of being brought about in interviews with the visitors. Outside contacts are essential but as a step toward broadening his social horizon, in a number of the interviews we found such processes as "recognizing the family as a partnership and working out plans with all the adults"; "helping each partner to see the other's side of the matter"; "appealing to his sense of fairness" and "building up his confidence in others."

One articulation is so epigrammatic that I hesitate to give it, but I am going to ask for a moment to give you the example from which it was drawn. "Assume the obvious." I know of two instances, practically the same situations, of which one was successfully treated and one was not. In both these instances the woman with whom the visitor was talking was not married to the man with whom she was living. In both the woman had burst into tears and made a partial admission of the fact, but in one interview the visitor said, "Then since you are not married, we had better make plans to insure the children's future." The remark of the other visitor, who was inexperienced, was, "Then aren't you married to Mr. Jones?" In the latter family, after nearly two years, we have not been able to break down the vehement denial which that shocked question from the case worker brought forth.

Whether the results of the attempt of this group of case workers to make their skill conscious and articulate will be of use in training new workers we do not yet know. There is, however, no difference of opinion as to the benefit to our own work of the attempt to analyze our processes. As I have said all through, more work and discussion is needed, but we do have a hope that with these simple and often commonplace bases of our practice as a start we may arrive at a tentative formulation of the technique of treatment—a setting down of the "practical details" of the "art" of human relationships.

THE USE OF THE TRANSFER WITHIN THE LIMITS OF THE OFFICE INTERVIEW¹

JESSIE TAFT

UNDER the general topic "Methods Used by Social Case Workers in the Development of Personality," I wish to discuss the use of what the psychoanalyst would call the "transfer" within the limits of the office interview. The discussion will be made from the viewpoint of a psychologist who is forced to depend upon office contacts almost entirely for any direct treatment but it is assumed that where an interview proves to be therapeutic in its effect, the processes are the same whether carried on by psychologist or case worker. The type of interview referred to would exclude technical psychoanalysis but in my own case would be guided consciously by a psychoanalytic psychology.

A good many people, case workers, teachers and even some psychiatrists dislike very much the thought of an emotional relationship to the client, student or patient. They often think of this as a sentimental appeal, a use of one's personality to induce the individual to do something which he would naturally evade or resist, an encouragement of crushes, a personal desire for admiration or adulation. People who have this strong aversion to emotional responses in themselves or their clients like to believe that treatment, successful readjustment of families and individuals comes from practical use of resources and the education of the individuals concerned through ideas and rational appeals.

While I sympathize with the objection which such people feel for the unprofessional attitude and lack of insight which often characterizes the personal contacts of the untrained or unadjusted person who bungles on the job because he does not understand himself or the methods he is unconsciously using, I do not think that the existence of bunglers should prevent us from recognizing that the basis of all case work therapy is primarily emotional, not rational or intellectual, and that we who deal with people are responsible for accepting and understanding technically the tools which we have been using more or less consciously and skillfully.

I am using the term *emotional* loosely, to avoid the word

¹ From *The Family*, October, 1924.

instinctive and mean by it everything except what we think of as intellectual, rational or ideational; the impulsive, feeling, wishing side of the human being.

The work which a psychologist does in his office presents interesting illustrations of the use of the transfer because the situations are separated from work on the environment and sometimes show rather unusual results even from a single interview. I am far from believing that the interview with the psychiatrist or the psychologist is magic, and I am convinced that for children, certainly, re-education and readjustment must be a continuous process carried out in the home from day to day over a long period; but the office interview gives an opportunity to analyze processes within a well-defined, limited situation where the mechanism is a little more superficial and apparent.

A girl of seventeen was reported from the high school because of the poor work she had been doing during the last term, whereas her work had hitherto been satisfactory, and because she seemed to be brooding over an unfortunate experience which had taken place about ten months before when she was seized by two men, forced into an automobile but rescued from an actual sex assault by the appearance of police officers. From that time on the girl had seemed to become more and more timid and could not be induced to go out alone or leave her home even for a vacation. In her interview with the psychologist the girl, although self-conscious, was unusually frank and outgoing in her attitude. There was no difficulty in getting her to talk. She was an attractive, likable youngster, who appealed to the psychologist, and a comfortable *rapproch* was established at once.

The social history and a few questions brought out these salient facts. Anna had always been rather timid and very much attached to her mother. In fact she seldom went anywhere without her. She could not bear the idea of leaving her—not even to go to camp. This attitude had not altered materially since the abduction. She was perhaps more afraid of being out at night but her chief new difficulty was inability to forget the incident. Her mind seemed always to be dwelling on it. She had never been interested in boys. Her mother did not want her girls to have boy friends. Even the oldest sister who worked was not allowed to go with anyone. The mother had no use for marriage, always talked against it to her daughters, and thought childbearing a terrible thing—to be avoided if possible. The father drank sometimes and was not as much interested in the family as the mother.

The mother had given no sex information until forced to when Anna at fifteen worked in a mill and heard things from the other girls which made her ask questions. What she knew about sex, she knew only from her experience of assault and the unlovely picture given by her mother.

The psychologist, using sex instruction as a vehicle, tried to get over to Anna a sense of the value of sex and of her own normal but repressed interest in it. Anna had denied erotic daydreams, all interest in boys, as well as interest in the love part of love stories. Everything on the sex side seemed quite sincerely to be a blank except the fact that she was always thinking about the abduction.

During the talk on the biology of sex, in which the illustrations in Stowell's *Sex for Parents and Teachers* were used to make things as clear as possible, the psychologist lost no opportunity to present the positive attitude toward the opposite sex, toward the sex act and toward childbearing. She even attempted to give the girl a sense of the pleasure values as well as the emotional significance of sex in all human lives. She endeavored to show that nature had left nothing to chance but had made sex a powerful force in all of us, however much we might try to believe otherwise.

Incidentally, in talking about the universality and normality of sex interest, the psychologist spoke about the sex curiosity of almost all little children and of the kind of exploration of their own bodies to which it often leads. At this point Anna made her first shy but spontaneous admission, "I guess I was no different from the rest."

During the interview, from time to time the psychologist kept the girl from feeling herself criticized or shut out, by recalling attitudes and experiences of her own youth similar to those now making life difficult for Anna and carefully refrained from anything which might be interpreted as disapproval of the mother herself, although her point of view toward men and sex had to be opposed.

The ugly aspects of the girl's own sex experience were not minimized but faced frankly and the necessity for understanding the sex needs of human beings even when they were not useful or beautiful was put to her in as simple and appealing a way as possible. Then the point was made very gently that a majority of girls and boys of Anna's age, even when they feel a strong disgust for the idea of sex most of the time, do sometimes yield to thoughts and daydreams connected with sex matters which they would be ashamed to have anyone know about and which they would ordinarily deny even to themselves. At this Anna nodded a shamefaced assent, and admitted that she couldn't keep her mind on her school work because she was always thinking about what had happened to her last fall. "Were they old or young men?" asked the psychologist quickly. "Oh they were not old, they were nice looking young fellows," said Anna. Then the psychologist, with a touch light enough to be almost humorous, said, "I guess I know why you can't keep your mind on your studies, Anna, and why you can't keep from thinking about the young men who attacked you. I have a good notion it is because underneath, in spite of yourself, you are really interested in what happened and you can't help wondering what it would have been like if the policeman hadn't come when he did, isn't that so?" Anna, abashed but relieved, nodded and then her sense of humor got the better of her and she smiled at her own self-deception. From that point on there was no resistance to the psychologist's viewpoint that all young girls are normally interested in young men and that if Anna were able to accept boy friends and go to parties and have good times with other young people she would probably forget all about what happened last fall.

When Anna left at the end of the interview, there was an atmosphere of warm, friendly feeling and a sense of comfort and relief which was unmistakable.

What has happened in this interview? Nothing permanent, probably, unless the mother can be reached, but within the narrow boundaries of the office, on this single occasion, a very shy inhibited child who has had a violent sex experience, accepted by herself and her family and acquaintances as horrible and revolting, has suddenly been enabled to drop all her conventional standards and habitual sex repression, and see, however temporarily, with genuine insight and without fear her own underlying interest in the whole affair.

Anna also accepted the psychologist's assertion that too much of her

emotional life was being centered in her mother, that it should be going into the interest in boys and the friendships with girls which were normal for girls of her age.

You may try to interpret the foregoing interview as the successful presentation of a number of new ideas to replace those formerly accepted, but the thing which can't be explained on an intellectual basis is why the same set of ideas, equally well presented, having succeeded with one case fails completely with another. Ideas of themselves have no dynamic character. They become active only when charged with the wishes and needs of the individual, only when they prove to be acceptable tools for the solving of an inner conflict.

In Anna's case, we start with a child whose conscious attitudes are dominated by her attachment to the mother. Her mother condemns sex, therefore Anna must repress any consciousness of sex interest. This repression might have been fairly successful, had it not been for the sensational experience, the medical examinations, the breaking down of all secrecy regarding sex information, the curiosity and interest of school companions, and the good looks of the two youths who attempted the assault. The whole affair gave a powerful impetus to the repressed interests already stimulated by adolescence, and brought about much more active and conscious daydreaming which, under the disguise of brooding fear and horror, became less offensive to the conscious standards of Anna as well as her family. How could she help thinking about this terrible thing which had happened to her? It surely was not her fault if she could not forget her fear after such a shock. In short, this abnormal sex experience constituted the first allowable outlet, however negative, for Anna's normal interests.

The interview was able to relieve her conflict, not because it presented ideas but because an adult, who for the time being stood to her in the place of a mother, gave her freedom from the repression of the real mother's standards and made her needs not only articulate but legitimate and approved. There must be first the existence of a need for which the idea may become the tool and second the reassuring and uncritical emotional medium which makes it possible for that need to become conscious.

The transfer of the girl to the psychologist in this case gave her the sense of security like that which is represented in our

dream of the completely approving, understanding, all enveloping mother. In the comfort and safety of that relationship any idea which met the needs of the repressed interests could be received without the resistance which arises from fear and guilt. It is the sanction of the mother and the existence of the unconscious or partially conscious sex impulses, not the virtue of the ideas themselves, which makes them capable of solving this conflict between equally vital aspects of a young girl's nature. The more interesting and valuable use of the transfer lies in the long time contacts where the interviews are repeated as often as necessary over a considerable period of time. Here the emotional *rapprochement* gives an ideal basis for an educational or re-educational process. The ideas and interests to which the client is introduced during this period become dynamic through their identification with the person who suggests them, and become in time natural channels for draining off a large part of the emotion which has been going into the transfer.

Possibly some of you may realize, if you stop to think it over that your present calling is due to its connection with an emotional experience of long ago which lent its radiance to certain lines of thought and activity now self-sufficient, well organized interests, quite independent of their original source of energy.

Rebecca gives an unusual example of what such a relationship can do over a long period to give a dynamic character to ideas and interests which have educational value.

Rebecca came in contact with the psychologist as a child of fourteen. She has kept up this contact for four years, off and on. She came as a girl who was repeating the fifth grade for the third time, and was considered "dumb or crazy" by her family and neighbors. She was obsessed with her own inferiority, retarded in all her processes, mental and physical, given to daydreaming, to the serious detriment of normal interest and attention, antagonistic toward her family and in great conflict over her inability to understand or completely repress sex ideas and impulses.

In the psychologist she found someone who was willing to maintain quite steadily over a prolonged period the ideal relationship which she had longed for but missed completely in both father and mother. This relationship was, of course, only symbolic, and was satisfied with comparatively few contacts, confined almost entirely to the office. Rebecca proved to be a girl of intelligence who could comprehend a point of view and who had the basis for some understanding of human relationships. It soon became evident that she was beginning to build a psychology of her own. Advantage was taken of the transfer to build up her beginning interest in sex, in nursing, in children, by the introduction of reading matter, a book on the biology of sex, a book on education, on nursery schools, on the behavior of

children. In the meantime Rebecca had taken part of a training course in a babies' hospital, and become helper in a day nursery. She wished to become a nurse or a social worker, because these were related to the psychologist's profession, but she realized she had not sufficient education. As a substitute, however, she took great satisfaction in the day nursery, which gave her a chance to do something for little children—to understand them as the psychologist had understood her.

In four years, a girl who was supposed to be subnormal and hopelessly maladjusted has developed an intelligent comprehension of her own and other people's difficulties which would do credit to a well-trained day nursery worker and which is not far from our own case work point of view. She sees little children with genuine insight. She realizes what may lie back of bad behavior and it is reported that she manages children very well.

Much of the emotion which was originally centered in the transfer to the psychologist has become attached to the ideas and interests which the psychologist represents, and is becoming organized and elaborated into an enriched mental life with an autonomy of its own, which will ultimately detach itself completely from its original source.

I do not mean to imply that this constitutes the whole of the treatment Rebecca has received. She has been under the care of a child placing agency during the entire period and the most painstaking case work has assisted in giving content and concrete realization to her new interests, and has provided new experiences in personal relationships which have also drained off much of the surplus emotion.

There is no need to argue about the value of the ideational elements in case work treatment. The case plan, the new point of view, the releasing idea, are accepted without reservation. The purpose of this paper is to call to your attention the nature of the underlying forces used consciously by the analyst and unconsciously by the case worker to vitalize ideas and plans. The emotional going over of the client to the case worker breaks down old fears and inhibitions and provides a safe medium in which the growth of new thoughts, feelings and habits become possible.

The case worker who has seen to her own adjustment first, before undertaking to bring about adjustment in other human lives, need have no fear of the transfer but will find in its conscious, skillful, and impersonal use her most valuable tool.

THE ART OF HELPING: THROUGH THE INTERVIEW¹

LUCIA B. CLOW

TO A person going through a large group of records, both new and old, in search of material on successful treatment, several changes in emphasis are apparent. The early records have nothing except treatment interviews. "Man looked healthy, so agent advised that he get to work at once." There was no time for investigation, for consultation with experts, for anything beyond the meeting and treating of each problem as it arose, although because of the meagre records it is hard to judge of the worker's objectives or of the results obtained. While thoughtfulness and consideration certainly went into the planning, treatment was somewhat on an intuitive basis.

Then in the development of the technique of diagnosis, in the search for facts and more facts, the ultimate use of those facts was sometimes obscured or pushed indefinitely ahead. Diagnostic and prognostic summaries were couched in vague and general terms. Or again, the visitor sat in solemn conclave with her superintendent or with the district committee and decided what was to be done with the family, "that these were the facts of the case," only to visit afterward to find an altered situation demanding an entirely new plan to be worked out extemporaneously with the family. Frequently, in spite of the stressing of the need for further facts when a plan did not grow out of diagnosis, the visitor found herself with long typewritten pages of information from collateral sources which she did not know how to use, or which she occasionally interpreted to show the need for some panacea—birth control, prohibition, minimum wage.

Our emphasis is now swinging back to the treatment phase again. We are accepting, of course, a forward-looking diagnosis as a foundation, utilizing, too, the stimulating but objective help of the case conference and bringing to the client's doorstep all the available resources of the community. Yet we are realizing also that the success of any except a fool proof plan (and of such, how many are there?) may be made or marred by the relationship

¹ From *The Family*, July, 1925.

between client and visitor, and that more and more in the medium of this interplay the plans for the family evolve.

This has given a new significance to the interview. "Well, but what do you say to a family on such and such an occasion?" is the query of others as well as the visitor-in-training. However, we are still far from formulating definite principles of how the interview may be used as a tool in treatment, although the psychiatric field has given—and is giving—incalculable help with this problem. But must not all of us repeatedly turn back to specific interviews for further material?

The following two interviews are presented for discussion—not at all in the spirit of charting a new field but as illustrations of how two rather typical situations were met in two families.

Mr. Grant was referred to the family agency by a court worker to whom he had complained about the care given by his wife to their two children, eight and six. At the time of the application, the children were still in the home with Mr. Grant, partially cared for by a relative who lived in the same building. Mrs. Grant had been gone a few days, was at the home of a friend who was said to be influencing Mrs. Grant to divorce her husband. After the visitor had had a long interview with Mr. Grant, she made several attempts to talk with Mrs. Grant, who answered the questions put to her, but who gave information guardedly and insisted that she would proceed with her divorce because of Mr. Grant's non-support and cruelty, and that Mr. Grant should support the children in an institution. Several collateral sources seen led the visitor to feel that the points of contention were not insurmountable; that if Mrs. Grant could only be persuaded to return before the break became established, an adjustment might be made. Even Mrs. Grant's attorney was willing to assist in a reconciliation. Mrs. Grant continued obdurate, however, and Mr. Grant, growing impatient, applied to a Catholic agency for placement of the children. Mrs. Grant was seen again, both by the visitor and by the priest, but she reiterated her refusal to return to Mr. Grant, although half-heartedly stating that she would like the custody of the children. At no time was there any success in getting any spontaneous reaction from her. In another attempt to formulate a plan a conference of the interested persons was arranged.

Father X, Mr. and Mrs. Grant, the latter's attorney and the visitor were present. Mr. Grant had in his hand a copy of the divorce proceedings which had been served on him the previous day and over which he was very much excited, vehemently declaring that he would counter claim all such accusations. On the other hand, Mr. Grant seemed not to consider Mrs. Grant, but only the welfare of his two children. Mrs. Grant blamed Mr. Grant for everything she had ever done; she had not gone out with other men, but even if she had, it would have been his fault because he once told her that if she wanted kind words she would have to go to the street to get them. Mr. Grant brushed these things aside as not worth consideration and asked about the care of the children, going over much of the ground already discussed with him before. Mrs. Grant insisted that Mr. Grant had struck her; he insisted he had only pushed her away. Mr. Grant insisted that many times Mrs. Grant had stayed out all night, that she arrived home one morning at 5 A.M. Mrs. Grant retorted that he knew perfectly well he

had locked her out of the house so that she was forced to sit on the porch. During this argument the visitor listened quietly and Father X acted as mediator. Finally, when the neglect of the children was stressed, Mrs. Grant began to cry, sobbing that everyone was against her. She got up as if to leave the room but the visitor went to her to calm her. Mrs. Grant stood by the window undecidedly. Mr. Grant spoke up, "What's the matter? If you need air, why don't you raise the window." The visitor suggested that Mr. Grant do this for her but when he made no move, the courtesy was performed by Father X. As the conference seemed to be getting nowhere, it was adjourned. The visitor suggested Mrs. Grant accompany her to lunch.

As they left the building Mrs. Grant was asked where she might like to go. The question was put quite casually as the visitor was anxious to know what familiarity Mrs. Grant had with downtown restaurants, these having played a prominent part in Mr. Grant's accusations. Mrs. Grant's reply was hesitating and it was hard to tell whether she did not know eating places or whether she did not wish to appear to know. The choice of lunch room was finally made by the visitor, a secluded table chosen and a nourishing lunch ordered. Mrs. Grant seemed to enjoy her meal, but she showed little experience with restaurant service and watched the visitor closely in the use of her silver. With the casual preliminaries of the ordering of the meal out of the way, a barren spot in the conversation was avoided by talking of clothes. Mrs. Grant was trimly dressed and it was possible to compliment her sincerely about her appearance. "Oh, but he says I lost all my good looks by going out with men." To this the visitor replied, avoiding temporarily the possible discussion of the present difficulty, "But he hasn't always said such things to you, has he?" With this as an opening wedge it was easy to turn the conversation back to Mrs. Grant's early married life. With great pride and in detail she told of her wedding in St. Margaret's, the finest one the church had ever had up to that time. With only a question here and there, a long story followed of her early home with Mr. Grant's parents, of her troubles with him, of several illnesses, including a period of extreme nervousness a year before when she had not been able to sleep. She spoke particularly of a certain doctor who had treated her kindly at that time. Then, somewhat abruptly, the conversation stopped and after a pause uninterrupted by further questions and in which Mrs. Grant seemed to be thinking over the situation, she said slowly that she thought Mr. Grant was looking thinner, that she wondered if he got enough to eat, that when she was at home she always tried to feed the family well, even taking the children with her to the store so that they could pick out what they wanted.

The visitor replied, "But don't you think that Mr. Grant is really worried over all this trouble?" Mrs. Grant admitted that he might be. She had wanted to surprise him, to make him think, so she applied for a divorce. He had thought she would come back as she had before when she went away. But she hated to see him looking so poorly. Then the visitor, risking everything she had gained, but feeling even surer than before with the new insight gained from Mrs. Grant's story that if Mrs. Grant could only return home and Mr. Grant be made to see her point of view the home might be saved, asked Mrs. Grant if she would not put aside some of her own troubles, consider the children, go back to Father X and tell him that, if Mr. Grant would move to another house (this had been one of the points of contention), she would return to live under the same roof. Mrs. Grant was hesitant, but further details as to the probable arrangement were brought to the support of the plan. These in turn brought out additional facts from Mrs. Grant. She spoke particularly of Mr. Grant's discourtesy to her in the preceding conference. This argument was met by

asking her if she did not think that both she and Mr. Grant were worried and had said things they each regretted. It was agreed finally, however, that after seeing Father X, Mrs. Grant was to go to her lawyer to discuss with him her return so that all should be done legally in case she wished to reopen divorce proceedings if the reconciliation failed. Mrs. Grant was then accompanied to Father X's office, and left to carry out the rest of her plan alone. Her actual return to the home took place a few days later.

Now of course, this interview by itself cannot be fruitful of results unless Mr. Grant can be reached and unless the visitor's diagnosis of the probably solvable sources of friction is correct. Yet the three objectives of the worker for this interview were accomplished. Mrs. Grant told freely her side of the trouble, a contact was established, and the first step in a reconciliation was taken.

The key points in the interview might be listed as follows:

(1) A setting favorable to the securing of confidence was created. In the sharing of food it is hard to maintain a barrier.

(2) The main issue was avoided until a sympathetic understanding had been established.

(3) The previous high water mark in the client's life, namely, her wedding and early married life, was utilized to balance against the present low water mark of the threatening divorce. Do we not many times forget to look for the high spots, and forget to study the circumstances that made for the happiness as well as for the unhappiness of the particular person whose adjustments we wish to understand?

(4) Only a tentative plan was offered, with definite loopholes of escape.

(5) The definite next steps were left to the client so that the plan would be of her own making as much as possible.

(6) The visitor's personality, without doubt, was a deciding factor; she was a married woman, older than the client, with children of her own. She was punctilious about small courtesies and was quiet spoken. Unconsciously her wider experience must have been a recommendation for the wisdom of her suggestions.

In the Reilly family was a very different situation. All the possibilities of a new contact were gone. Mr. and Mrs. Reilly and their five children had been known to social agencies and public outdoor relief departments in various communities in two states. An accidental near-asphyxiation of the children brought newspaper publicity which was far from helpful. The family society in A— knew of at least three occasions when the family

had been returned as public charges. In one community they had been given tickets to leave town as they were considered undesirable. There was a history of irregular work, of residence in cheap rooming houses; they were always going to move on to something better, but were also endowed with a faculty for achieving a return to A— at 5 P.M. with no place to go. Both Mr. and Mrs. Reilly had come from homes which had been broken when the children were small.

One cold day in December a call came in to the district office. The Reillys were needing food. The visitor making the call had seen the Reilly's only a few times but had recently had physical and mental tests of Mr. Reilly which had been productive of no particular findings. There seemed no tangible reason why Mr. Reilly should work so irregularly. He had given up his last job when jobs were not plentiful to get his back pay and have cash on hand. His failure to find other work had elicited some rather positive remarks from the department of outdoor relief. Upon the occasion of this particular visit a school nurse was leaving the house and Mrs. Reilly was concluding her argument against some much needed medical attention for the children. When Mrs. Reilly and the visitor were alone, the visitor's first comment was that she was surprised to hear Mrs. Reilly talking in such a way to a person who came to be of help to the family. Mrs. Reilly retorted, "But of what help has anyone been to the family?" and launched volubly into her grievances. A refusal of Mr. Reilly's recent request for aid was uppermost. The visitor listened quietly, without arguing back as Mrs. Reilly had evidently expected her to do.

Mrs. Reilly straightened herself with a visible physical effort and put the baby down out of her arms. She had been talked to by social workers all over the state and she had made up her mind that this time she would do the talking, that what she was going to say took courage. After all why weren't the Reillys as good as some of the other families that got help? Mr. Reilly did not drink or gamble, he had never been untrue to her or she to him, they were both fond of their children, when Mr. Reilly had quit his job he had had a better place in view or he had needed immediate cash. She told in detail of some of the hardships in their early life. In further support of her position she mentioned that she had two "very respectable" brothers in another city.

The visitor listened until Mrs. Reilly had completely spent her anger; then said that what Mrs. Reilly told her interested her very much. Now that Mrs. Reilly had explained how the situation seemed to her, would Mrs. Reilly like to know how the situation seemed to the agency? Mrs. Reilly would. In simple language the visitor explained the community point of view, the transportation agreement, the Community Fund, the society's budget and the expensiveness of social work. The visitor would like to think over what Mrs. Reilly had told, perhaps present some of the facts to the advisory committee; she respected Mrs. Reilly's point of view and was glad Mrs. Reilly had taken her into her confidence. In the meantime, would Mrs. Reilly think over what she, the visitor, had said?

It was significant to note that, hardly a day later, Mrs. Reilly with Mr. Reilly in tow appeared at the district office. Her courage had flagged a little but she still spoke firmly. She felt perhaps she had not told the whole truth. She wanted the visitor to know that Mr. Reilly was easily influenced, that he picked up bad associates, that if he didn't drink or gamble now, he soon would if he kept on in the present fashion. Mr. Reilly weakly assented to Mrs. Reilly's statements. The visitor was able to talk over a tentative plan of establishing the family in its own rooms, and Mrs. Reilly was told that any plans worked out with her were based on the visitor's confidence of Mrs. Reilly's opinion of the situation. There is not time to

tell of the next processes, of the development of responsibility and self-respect in both Mr. and Mrs. Reilly, largely through interviews with both of them and putting the responsibilities for decisions upon them. Which clinic would Mrs. Reilly have the children attend? Here were the addresses and clinic hours of the available dispensaries. Was Mr. Reilly going to vote if he could establish his residence? If Mary was having a poor report card hadn't Mrs. Reilly better talk to the teacher?

The key points in the preceding interview might be listed as follows:

(1) The chance opportunity was seized and utilized for getting at the client's point of view and for giving her a full and patient hearing. It is not always possible or desirable to set the stage. The visitor at no time had been satisfied with her contact with the family, but for this particular visit she had no objective beyond that of handling the problem of the hour.

(2) What might be called a second first interview took place; that is, there was a retelling, with more elaboration of the material considered important in a first interview. Many times this second first interview contains more significant material than the first one, which may have touched in only a perfunctory way on deep rooted problems.

(3) The client's point of view was not only secured but respected and an appeal to her intelligence was made in explaining the community's attitude. By putting her on her honor for telling the truth, her truthfulness was stimulated.

(4) The visitor's strong interest in community organization problems was undoubtedly a factor, although superficially it might appear to be incompatible with the client's sense of individual grievance. The visitor comments that the explanations given Mrs. Reilly were almost verbatim quotations from a talk she had given to a church group.

In the analysis of any treatment interviews, we are still handicapped by the lack of proper terminology, in spite of our continuous efforts to record behavior. We are even further away from recording in definite terms any of the worker's objectives or processes, clear pictures of which are necessary to the study of the use of the interview. For example, how much more effective the interview with a certain feeble-minded man might have been, if the student visitor had known the previous visitor's method of conducting her home visits. As it was, the client came into the

office asking to see the previous visitor. The superintendent, to whom he was referred, asked him why he felt he must talk to Miss Brown instead of Miss Smith. "Oh, we like Miss Smith all right, but Miss Brown when she came to see us, she just talked about one thing at a time. We got that thing all decided before we talked about something else. Now Miss Smith she talks to us about everything all at once." Some form of subjective recording would have shown how the visitor "talked about one thing at a time."

In conclusion may I just make one more plea for the further study of the interview as a tool in the art of helping?

OPENING THE WAY¹

ANNA VLACHOS

THERE is a type of interview that takes place usually at a point of crisis in treatment and marks a turn in the lives of the individuals involved. Client and worker have come to a stand-still; obstacles bar the way of progress and are so covered by pride or fear that they are all but hidden from view. The purpose of the interview at such a time is to help the client free himself from all conflicts.

The art of impressing the client with the worker's appreciation of his attitude, erroneous though that attitude may be, and with the sincerity of her concern for him, is probably the first requisite of such an interview. Allowing him to say all he wants to say, in his own way, and to his full satisfaction, is equally essential. The importance of letting him feel that he is master of his own affairs, and leaving with him the privilege of making his own decision and forming his own plans, cannot be overestimated. All that the case worker may do is to help him to a fuller expression of his views, to interpret to him what may be vague, to guide his thinking, and to point to a possible solution of his problems.

In such an interview, it should not be the case worker's intention to go much beyond the point of removing conflicts. She should allow time for reactions. To stimulate a client into formulating plans immediately following an 'unburdening, has proven to be futile sufficiently often to warn against it with emphasis. On the other hand, giving the client time to settle down to the comfortable feeling of being free to think and to make his decisions has over and over again brought the best of results.

The two interviews I have selected illustrate the latter point of view.

John and Margaret had been at odds practically since the beginning of their married life some five years ago. It had been a forced marriage. Margaret's relatives knew this and in countless ways had made John feel that he was an undesirable relative, and had given Margaret to understand that she was a disgrace. John promptly turned his back on Margaret's people, expecting her to join him at once in his independent attitude. But she was a gentle little soul and clung to the protection of home ties even though given grudgingly and disapprovingly. John's growing resentment of the relatives expressed itself in increasing reproach of Margaret, especially

¹ From *The Family*, October, 1924.

after the first baby was born: John wanted to go his way alone, defiantly and independently; Margaret simply could not go with him. They separated; Margaret went to live with her mother, and John found employment in another city. But an environment of constant criticism and humiliation did not yield Margaret happiness and when John confessed that he, too, was lonely, they decided to try living together again. Then the second child was born, a puny little creature. John and Margaret both developed tuberculosis; he was forced to give up his job, and there was no income. The family case working agency was appealed to.

The young couple were prevailed upon to accept sanatorium care; their belongings were stored with Margaret's sister, the children placed with unwilling relatives. Reports from the sanatorium indicated that the disease might be arrested. For a few months all went well. Then both of them left the sanatorium against the physician's advice. The case worker learned later that John was working in a nearby town on a bread wagon, and that Margaret and her babies had been taken in by her mother. It was at this point that the case worker called John and Margaret together for an interview in her office.

It was evening; the room was quiet, the atmosphere friendly and formal, the greeting cordial. The case worker complimented them on their willingness to come and urged them to make themselves comfortable and to take all the time they wanted to talk things over. Immediately John jumped to the defensive: "I suppose you wanted me to come here so you could tell me to go back to the sanatorium." Recognizing that resistance to such a possible suggestion was in the foreground of his mind, the worker said: "Oh, let's not talk about that just now. Tell me, how do you feel?" Both said that they were fine, John able to work and Margaret to care for the children. They defended their stand with much bravado, both, nevertheless, visibly fighting off tears. The worker realized that this attitude was assumed only because they felt so helpless and decided not to attempt to break it down just then. She inquired without any particular emphasis into the reason for their sudden departure from the sanatorium. Margaret made no reply, but John curtly stated that he had left because he had wanted to go to work; he had been tired of doing nothing. The visitor said that she could well understand his wish to go to work, but why had he gone so suddenly?

(She was careful not to ask why he had not let her know about his decision, nor did she put the sudden question, "Was that your real reason?" Such a question would only have strengthened his attitude of defense.) John made no reply. The worker then asked some suggestive questions: Was the treatment not satisfactory? Recovery too slow? Poor food? Attention meager? Time heavy on his hands without occupation? Did he have too much time to think about things at home?

By thus leading John from removed reasons to what the case worker thought might be the real reason, she stimulated him into wanting to speak for himself and, watching closely the collapsing of his resistance, she finally judged that the right moment had come for her to say: "I know you have been feeling badly; that you have been terribly up against it. Can't you tell me what was wrong?"

Immediately his assumed boast of good health changed into bitter complaint. Giving free rein to his pent up feelings, he said that he was sore because he had lost his home, his children, his furniture, everything; even his self-respect was gone for he had accepted help for his wife and children from people who despised him; he was of no account; he had been ignored; Margaret's sister had sold his things; he wanted to be a man and play a man's part and take care of his babies; he wanted to see them with Margaret—not with her relatives—because he wanted them to be happy; he

would rather die than accept help from Margaret's people. This was his reason for leaving the sanatorium and going to work.

Margaret joined him in his grievances; her mother had been writing letters of complaint, and since Margaret had returned, she had seen that her babies were not welcome in her mother's home. They were considered a burden and expense; they were repulsed and their little appeals for affection refused. In their baby way they had suffered; they had not understood. Margaret, sobbing by this time, declared she would never leave them again.

Their minds were filled with the question of how to hold their own against the attitude of their people, rather than with the question of how to gain health and independence. For the present, hard work for John and temporary misery for Margaret and the children seemed to them the only way. The visitor suggested that they dismiss the relatives from their minds for evidently they were not going to be very helpful. She let them know that she appreciated how hard things had been for them and assured them that as long as so much unhappiness had come to them through the relatives, they simply should not figure in future plans. Perhaps there might be another way of bringing about a better situation.

John, encouraged, offered to make his position more clear; he had already started saving a little money and as soon as he had enough, he would re-establish his home. What other way was there than for him to keep on working? The visitor agreed that most likely he would be able to save for a little while but she wondered whether he might not be losing out in the end. She pictured to him the state of exhaustion that she feared he must be in every night—at the close of a day of jumping on and off a bread wagon, and running up and down steps. She intimated that she knew a little about what exhaustion meant.

Identifying himself with the picture she had held up to him, John asked the visitor whether he should give up his job. She said that she wanted him to use his own judgment; that she approved heartily of his wish to support his family and suggested that they talk over what she might possibly do to assist them in carrying out their plans. John had not been looking for co-operation; he had rather been bracing himself against possible opposition. When he saw that the latter was not forthcoming, the last remnant of his resistance broke down. His whole attitude showed that he wanted to acknowledge his physical weakness, his mental weariness. There was a long pause, and then he told the truth; a few days ago he had had a hemorrhage.

The case worker gave no sign of alarm and all mention of a return to the sanatorium was avoided. She talked in a general way about health measures, gradually narrowing down to the point where she could emphasize the advantage to John and Margaret of regaining their health and incidentally becoming independent of their relatives.

She talked encouragingly and when she saw that their emotional stress had subsided and that the way to constructive thinking was opening up, she became a little more definite and suggested that it might be comforting to them both to have a physician look them over, someone whose diagnosis could be relied upon. Neither of them offered opposition. They discussed their preference for one doctor or another, finally deciding to return to their own physician. They promised to let the visitor know at once what he might say. Seeing that their thinking was focusing itself on their health interest, where she wanted it to be, the worker terminated the interview.

A few days later John returned to the office. Their physician had found Margaret's condition the same, but John's a good deal worse; his work had done him much harm. John had already written a letter to his boss giving

up his job. He worked out a plan to go to the Adirondacks where he loved to be and where, without expense to himself, he could camp with another man. Margaret and the children were put on an adequate relief budget by the family agency and living arrangements were made for them in the country, independent of the relatives.

The problem presented to the case worker in this interview was the breaking down of a barrier of hurt pride and resentment which stood in the way of her clients' progress in working out their real problem—ill health. She opened the way for them by turning the discussion at the very outset away from what might have seemed to her clients a premeditated plan to an expression of their immediate feelings: What were their feelings? Then, having been relieved emotionally, without any blocking on the part of the visitor, she led them to speak of their desires: What did they want first and most? In this instance it was independence from relatives, and the visitor accepted this as the basis for a plan. After she had assured them of her understanding of their point of view, she was in a position to direct their attention to the fact that the gaining of their desires lay through an intelligent approach to health.

When they had benefited by the full opportunity to express their own wishes and to defend their own plans, thereby freeing them from their emotional attitude, she could point to the first step in thoughtful planning: What were they thinking?

Finally, seeing that they were safely on the way to intelligent behavior, she did not press in on them with a program of her own making, but left to them the practical answer to the last question in her mind: How will they act?

In the following interview, as in the first, the procedure started with an expression of the client's feelings. The case worker opened the way for this by showing interest in her client's preferences and desires.

The critical point lay in the recognition of the validity of these desires, and the acceptance of them as a basis for action. As in the other interview, this acceptance made possible the suggestion that a change from emotional to intelligent behavior would be the means of achieving desire. When the client gave evidence of having reached that point of view, she was left free to act for herself.

Mrs. Jordan was eighteen years old when she married Mr. Jordan, fifteen years older than she and able to give her the comforts of life. When they had been married ten years he was arrested and imprisoned for stealing automobiles. Immediately after his release Mrs. Jordan discovered that he had been living with another woman. When she accused him he disappeared with the woman and all efforts to locate him proved futile. Mrs. Jordan then went to work but she could not earn sufficient to support herself and her three children. When her people refused to do anything for her, on the ground that it was Mr. Jordan's responsibility to look after his own family, the woman appealed for assistance to the family case working agency. A weekly allowance was arranged for her.

After a time the case worker noticed an attitude of reserve in Mrs. Jordan which she met at first with respect. Gradually this reserve turned into slight antagonism and later into unmistakable resentment. Every attempt that the worker made to come closer to Mrs. Jordan met with rebuff.

Still later the worker noticed that Mrs. Jordan was wearing expensive hosiery and slippers. She had new clothing of a good quality that could not have been purchased out of her income. The worker carefully alluded to these acquisitions but no response came from Mrs. Jordan. Then she decided to ask outright what new resources she might have. Mrs. Jordan staged quite a scene, wept and asked if there was nothing in the wide world that she could keep to herself.

One day, just as the visitor entered, a man's derby and coat were hastily spirited from the room. Mrs. Jordan saw that the visitor saw, but offered no explanations. Adhering to her direct method of questioning, the worker asked why she so quickly removed the things, but Mrs. Jordan fenced, claiming that there had been no particular reason for her doing so. Again the matter was dropped.

Shortly after this, the family moved into another house of Mrs. Jordan's own choosing and at a larger rent. She was to take as boarder an elderly gentleman. The arrangements were made by the visitor apparently to her satisfaction. Suddenly she telephoned the district secretary saying curtly that she did not want the case worker to visit her again; that she was through with her and would hereafter take care of herself. She pretended to be offended because of the unsatisfactory arrangements made for the old gentleman's board. Moreover, she was sick and tired of the visitor's questioning about things that concerned only herself. Casually the district secretary suggested that Mrs. Jordan come to the office.

Mrs. Jordan arrived; she was courteous and reserved, but seemed to wait for the secretary to begin the conversation. Ignoring Mrs. Jordan's recent display of irritation, the secretary asked how she liked her new home, following this with an expression of concern for her financial comfort. She suggested that the high rent might be a source of worry to her. Smilingly Mrs. Jordan declared that she had faith that all would go well as long as she was able to work—and she intended to work very hard indeed. Now Mrs. Jordan had not been at all well so the secretary asked her what her condition now was. She replied that she had not been to her physician for a month; that she had little concern about sickness of any kind. The secretary did not oppose this attitude, but, much interested, asked how she came to feel that way. Proudly Mrs. Jordan declared that she had found a new philosophy of life, a new religion, which quite removed her from the consideration of any disease. At the mention of this new attitude, the secretary urged her to talk more about it, especially from the point of view of personal benefit.

It was then that Mrs. Jordan became quite talkative. She referred to the time when she was still living with Mr. Jordan; how happy and fortunate she thought she had been, how she had imagined that she loved

him and how, despite his infidelity and desertion, she had tried until a few months ago to convince herself that she still loved the father of her children, and she had even tried to make herself hope for his return. Now, through her new religion, she discovered that she had not really known true love and happiness.

She warmed more and more to her subject, saying how she had gained freedom of thought, how her burdens were lightened, and how she no longer had any interest in her past sorrow and humiliation. All she knew now was that God was good and life was good and all things would work together for good. Her cheeks glowed, there was a happy light in her eyes; she grew eloquent. It did not take unusual perception to see that Mrs. Jordan was speaking of something more personal and earthly than her new philosophy.

"And there is someone you care about terribly, isn't there?" the secretary ventured. With genuine pride and joy Mrs. Jordan confirmed the suggestion. Yes, there was someone else. Immediately the secretary exclaimed, "Oh, how very, very nice; I am so glad for you." "Oh, are you?" asked Mrs. Jordan, surprised almost to the point of incredulity. "Certainly I am glad for you, and why not? You are young and good looking; you have had bitter disappointments and surely should have happiness if it comes your way."

Mrs. Jordan began to cry and blurted out that she had not expected this understanding; that she had rather been in a thousand fears lest her new friendship should be condemned. In defense she had decided on a course of secret disregard of conventions, had practically made up her mind to let her new lover live with her. "I don't care what anybody thinks; I know I am doing right," is what she said, but as a matter of fact, she knew that she was doing wrong, and was trying to justify her wrongdoing by defiance. This, then, explained her resentment of the visitor's interested inquiries.

"Why should you want to defy conventions?" asked the secretary. Mrs. Jordan sat in thought for a while, then said that she held out so firmly against a divorce urged long ago by her relatives, protesting always that she would never cease to care for Mr. Jordan, that she did not see how she could suddenly take a different stand. She wanted them to think that she would always remain a faithful wife and mother. "But if you carry out your intentions, *will* you be a faithful wife and mother?" The secretary asked her to consider her self-respect and to remember that the time would come when her children would not be able to reconcile their mother's conduct with the standards she had taught them. She had not thought of these things; she had only thought of stifling, burying, and forgetting.

Taking the lead now, the secretary asked, "Do you really care enough for Mr. Jordan to forgive his bad treatment and trust yourself and your children again to his care?" Quickly and vehemently, "No." "Do you see any advantage in trying to make your people think that you do?" She smiled a little and guessed that perhaps they knew differently anyhow. "Do you see any good reason why you should live a lonely life just because Mr. Jordan failed you?" Well, perhaps she did not want to live a lonely life—in fact she was sure she was not going to live a lonely life. "Agreed, then, that you are entitled to your share of happiness, why not think about a reasonable way of attaining it? Might it not be well to inform yourself, instead of trying to fool yourself into believing that there are no laws?" Mrs. Jordan was a little shame-faced and said, "You must think I am awful." On the contrary, the secretary declared, she thought that Mr. Jordan was rather awful, as he had made a practice of

intriguing good women in consideration of fat fees from miscreant husbands.

The atmosphere was considerably lighter by this time, so the secretary asked Mrs. Jordan if she now understood her irritability toward her visitor, and when she acknowledged that she had really always liked the visitor and considered her a real friend, the secretary suggested that she go home to think things over, write to her people, and then discuss matters with the visitor. She suggested that there were certain things that Mrs. Jordan might wish to bear in mind; she might intelligently consider matters of health, conventions and laws; she would probably feel happier if she took a straightforward attitude with her relatives, acknowledging that she had been holding to a false ideal; and, lastly, she would want to make sure that her new man was not a myth but that he honestly and substantially represented love, happiness, and security. The interview was then brought to a close.

Mrs. Jordan wrote to her father, frankly stating that she was ready to follow his advice. He has authorized her to engage a lawyer at his expense, and legal steps are being considered. The new man in question has brought his mother to live with Mrs. Jordan. He is very fond of the children and they of him. As soon as Mrs. Jordan is free, he intends to marry her.

May not the principles that were followed in these two interviews hold good in similar situations where fear, pride, prejudice, sense of guilt, or what-not, bar the client's progress? May not these obstacles be removed by giving him a wide opportunity for self-expression, relieving him from emotional stress, and letting him state his own desires?

And may not these desires, accepted as valid by the case worker, serve as a basis for suggestions that she may make in directing the client's thinking toward the laying of a sounder plan?

Beginning the interview by ridding the client of the incubus of any premeditated plan, removing his resistance thereto, and ending the interview when he feels free and competent to make his own decisions, would seem to be one method at least of opening the way to an intelligent solution of his problems.

AN INTERVIEW¹

Summary of Family Status

THE M family—consisting of father, mother, and four children ranging in age from fifteen to one year old—has been helped by the family welfare society for more than four years. Mr. M has been incapacitated during this time because of a rheumatic condition, and the family has been completely dependent on the organization except for clothing given by the church. Although at first both Mr. and Mrs. M were tempted to give a glowing picture of their home before his physical breakdown, subsequent contact with them has revealed the fact that he used to drink and gamble, that they were usually in debt, and that Mrs. M's hysterical hot temper kept her constantly in trouble with the neighbors. After supervision by the family welfare society began they became more frank about their previous history, made good church and clinic contacts and were co-operative.

The family welfare society learned twice from Mr. M and also from Mrs. M's brother that Paul, the oldest boy, a promising student, and now a recipient of a scholarship, is illegitimate, the child of a man Mrs. M met before marrying her husband. (We had already learned that Paul was illegitimate through the social service exchange, which showed that an attempt had been made to place him when he was a baby.) On both occasions when Mr. M told the worker, he made her promise not to divulge to his wife that he had done so. For more than four years the situation continued thus, the knowledge of Paul's birth being kept a secret between the worker and Mr. M. Mrs. M, despite a certain frankness and sincerity in her approach to us and her desire to be aided in her problems with her children and husband, never somehow brought herself to tell us the truth. At this point in our relationship with the family, we decided to tell Mrs. M what we knew of Paul's birth for the following reasons:

(1) To put on a franker basis the relationship between us. It seemed more than probable that she was perfectly aware of our knoweldge. She knew that we had visited her brother, with whom she was not on friendly terms and who would be likely to

¹ From *The Family*, May, 1929.

tell us. She knew that Mr. M had come to the office several times alone and that his more or less gossip disposition would lead him to talk. This mutual awareness of a situation in which neither side had the courage to face the other was inhibiting a free and helpful contact.

(2) In order that our objective approach might help to remove some of the guilty feelings back of Mrs. M's blockings and make her more able to handle the subject of sex instruction with the children. In discussing such matters with Mrs. M she appeared repressed, uncertain, and unwilling to give sex instruction to her children.

(3) In order to determine more clearly what effect Paul's status had on the relationships between Mr. and Mrs. M, Mr. M and Paul, and Mrs. M and Paul. Ever since the boy's adolescence Mrs. M has been hinting unhappily that Mr. M is not treating Paul "right." She herself has shown an increasing tendency to compare Paul favorably to all the other children, praising his superior scholastic record, sense of responsibility, religious devotion, and so on. She talks, too, a great deal of Mr. M's meanness and irritability. We wondered how much Mrs. M's accusations against him had reality in his jealousy of Paul's parentage, how much she, herself, was seeing in Paul an idealized picture of the lover of her youth, how much she might be encouraging Mr. M's harshness to Paul by anticipating and exaggerating it.

(4) In order to determine whether the family had planned telling Paul about his birth and, if so, what interpretation would be given. It seemed probable that a shy adolescent, raised in a home full of sex tension and where the arrival of a new baby has been a yearly event, would have conflicts about sex in general and about his own birth in particular. We wanted to know whether Mrs. M felt that Paul already suspected the truth and how much these suspicions were opening up for him a whole vista of conflict, questionings, rejections, and inferiorities.

Preparatory Thinking

In the preparation of this interview we had to consider chiefly Mrs. M's personality and habitual method of response. We remembered a previous interview in which we had informed her

that questionable reports were coming to the office that she was receiving men visitors while her husband was in a convalescent home. Our object at that time was to get her confidence before having these reports verified through other sources. We had visited the home and, after some preparatory general discussion, asked that the children leave the room. We prefaced our information with remarks as to desiring her confidence and frankness before anything else. Mrs. M grew more apprehensive with each sentence. When we finally came to the point she burst into a flood of tears, hysterically denied everything, and loudly called upon all her neighbors to disprove the gossip.

An analysis of the reasons for our obvious failure in this interview brought out the fact that our whole technique was such as to bring into play all the elements in Mrs. M's personality destructive to *rapprochment*, at the same time minimizing the positive side of her nature. Generally, a study of her personality would reveal the following factors for the building up of contact:

<i>Favorable</i>	<i>Unfavorable</i>
Gaiety	Apprehensiveness
Sense of humor	Excitability
Susceptibility to praise	Self-dramatization
Willingness to co-operate	

Mrs. M's observation of our deliberate preparation (sending the children out of the room), the tension which our preamble caused, and the final climax of our remarks were all such as to stimulate in her the unfavorable factors. With this in mind, we prepared our second interview. We tried to utilize as much as possible the positive aspects of her personality, at the same time minimizing by a casualness of manner, an avoidance of climax, the likelihood of apprehension, excitability, or self-dramatization being called into play.

Procedure

Introduction: While visiting the home, we informed Mrs. M that several case workers were engaged in a study in which we were asking our more intelligent mothers to help us and with which we hoped she could assist. Mrs. M modestly disclaimed any

intelligence, but seemed interested and flattered. We made an evening appointment for the following Thursday.

Development: Mrs. M came to the office at the appointed time. She appeared flushed from the exertion of walking, and was wearing a new scarf and a rose in her collar. We complimented her on her color, noticed the rose and the scarf, and insisted that she remove her coat so that we could see the dress she was wearing. Mrs. M laughingly confided that her husband told her she looked like a "chicken" before departing. Her mood appeared to be somewhat self-congratulatory. She briefly reviewed all her past troubles and told us that she used to cry and threaten to commit suicide. She believes she has grown stronger during the last couple of years and feels sure that we had never observed her cry. She had wept in our presence on several occasions, but we tacitly agreed with her.

We then engaged her in our study—an account of some of the principles of home economics and housekeeping she had learned since contact with the agency—and Mrs. M began to recall the habits and eccentricities of various past workers, many of which seemed humorous on reflection. We tried to enter into some of her fun and encouraged her to grow expansive.

At the close of the interview, a friend of ours stopped at the office with a car and we invited Mrs. M to go riding with us. She gladly accepted and snuggled into the back of the car. She seemed elated, and reminisced freely during the ride about places we passed along the way—a hospital the children had been in, a movie she remembered being built, a factory she had worked in. As this was the last day of the school term, the conversation drifted naturally to the children's promotions. They had all done well—Joseph promoted with a 7, Martha with an 8, John with a 9—but Paul surprised them by boosting his science mark from fair to excellent. As usual, Mrs. M had most to say about Paul and we encouraged her this time by agreeing with her conviction of his unusual attainments and even pointing some out ourselves. At this point Mrs. M began her habitually veiled and unhappy complaints about Mr. M. She regretted the fact that he did not see fit to permit Paul more recreation than he did. He was

working a willing horse to death. While very decent about letting her and Martha go out when they pleased, why did he want Paul to stay home with him, always criticizing and pointing out new duties? Responsible as Paul was he sometimes said to her that he felt like running away from home on account of Mr. M's nagging. At this point we inquired in a rather casual tone, "Do you think, maybe, Paul knows Mr. M isn't his father?" Owing to the darkness, we could not see the expression on her face, but heard her answer in the same tone, "I don't know, I never told him." For the moment, it seemed to us that Mrs. M did not realize that this was the first occasion Paul's illegitimacy was being faced by her with us, her reply came so easily and without hesitation. There was after this, however, a long pause. Then she went on to express the opinion that she didn't think Mr. M had ever told Paul either. They had both felt it best to let him grow up believing his paternity to be the same as that of the other children. She couldn't think of anyone who would tell him. Conversation drifted to other topics, Mrs. M commenting on irrelevant occurrences in the home and land-marks on the way.

We brought the conversation back and suggested that, from the outside, Mr. M showed a very commendable interest in Paul. We wondered, however, whether in the home he was ever ugly about Paul's paternity to her. She replied that he could be mean about many things, but he never "threw up" Paul's birth to her. That aspect of the situation seemed to be something which was simply not articulated between them, even during their quarrels about Mr. M's being harsh to Paul; we had the feeling that neither one of them probably had the courage to mention the thing openly between them. Mrs. M thought it was possible that his attitude toward the boy might be influenced by jealousy as to paternity, but he never mentioned it in just so many words. We told Mrs. M we thought that Mr. M's attitude was nothing more or less than the feeling many fathers had in resisting the growing freedom and independence of an adolescent child. Complicated by his own crippled condition and dependency on others, the situation was probably accentuated in their home. We reminded her of Mr. M's pride in Paul's scholastic record, how happy he was when

Paul got the scholarship and his interest in giving Paul sex instruction, thereby showing a positive as well as an unsympathetic side in his attitude toward Paul.

Mrs. M gradually told us something about the circumstances surrounding Paul's birth, not in a coherent chronological account, but between pauses and other remarks: After her father's death, her mother went to live with her son, with whom Mrs. M could not get along (reason not given). She, herself, independent through work, went to live in a boarding house where she met Paul's father. He was a big man, from the West, a lumberjack. It must be that she "lost her head." Three months after pregnancy was established, he went back West, and she never heard from him since. Every dog has his day, and Mrs. M believes that God will punish him. She, personally, has never wished him one hour's bad luck. There was another man about whom she had told us before. He also was very interested in her and wanted to marry her, even after Paul was born. He wanted her to go and live with him in Chicago, but leave the baby with her mother. Mrs. M was afraid her mother wouldn't treat the baby right so she didn't go away. Her brother had wanted her to place the child, but she could not find it in her heart to give him up. Several times, while Mrs. M was telling us this, there was a danger of self-pitying tears, but the moments passed and she survived them.

Toward the end, Mrs. M's manner became more quiet and thoughtful than it had been at the beginning; she seemed to develop a religious mood. In the old days, when Mr. M had not treated her well, she used to wish to see him stretched out sick before her. She often wonders whether God has punished her by making it come true. Sometimes when she looks at the North Star she seems to see the face of her dead little son, Jim, shining out. Mr. M thinks she's crazy, but she can't help it. At the end of the ride, Mrs. M thanked us and we promised to visit her church.

Evaluation and Discussion

An analysis of this interview reveals effort in two distinct directions:

(1) To establish in Mrs. M a feeling of perfect security in the case worker's esteem.

(2) To produce an effect of unemotional casualness on the topic of Paul's illegitimacy.

To achieve the former, we utilized all the positive elements in her personality by, (1) asking her to help us in a study; (2) praising her appearance; (3) entering into her fun; (4) inviting her to ride with us.

To achieve the second, we (1) established the study we were making as the real reason for our interview with her; (2) invited her to go riding with us in a spontaneous, unplanned fashion; (3) framed our question, "Do you think Paul knows Mr. M is not his father?" in such a way as to emphasize the boy's mental content, rather than the fact of illegitimacy; (4) let this question follow in a logical way after a topic introduced by Mrs. M herself.

We considered this interview successful not only because it accomplished what it set out to do (i.e., face Mrs. M with the fact that we were aware of Paul's illegitimate birth) but also because it went over without arousing her habitual resistance to the topic or any display of emotionalism which might have switched the emphasis from an objective consideration of Paul's problem to a self-pitying dramatization of her past injury. Having thus securely established with her a pattern that Paul's birth is a topic to be discussed without apprehension, we feel that this will help to make all future and more fundamental discussions of the boy's relationship with both mother and step-father frank and helpful.

There are one or two general questions which occurred to us as a result of this experiment in technique which might be considered in connection with other situations. Dare a case worker ever undertake to "talk out" an event in her client's life, conventionally considered as immoral, without first eliminating all feelings of blame? In comparing the two interviews mentioned here, one where we had to face Mrs. M with the report about her relations with men, and the second where we faced her with our knowledge of Paul's birth, is it not possible that the difference in result was due to the case worker's difference in ability to understand the need back of both situations? In the first interview, may not her tone of voice, facial expression, and muscular tension have indicated unconsciously to the client the case worker's latent sense of blame, thus serving to make the interview unsuccessful?

SOCIAL TREATMENT FROM THE STANDPOINT OF A CLIENT¹

CLAUDIA WANNAMAKER

SIX years ago a family was referred to the Institute for Juvenile Research by one of the local social agencies because of behavior difficulties in the oldest child, a girl of eight years. Although the social history includes many inter-related factors, only those which are pertinent to this study are given here.

The family includes a dependent mother of Hungarian birth and five children. She came to the United States at the age of fourteen, and was employed at domestic service until her marriage four years later.

The first social registration occurred after the death of the father in 1917. Since then, there have been no less than twenty-seven agencies helping this mother to solve her problems. The number includes courts, institutions, family welfare agencies, and various health organizations. There have been between twenty-five and thirty social workers visiting the home at different times. For the most part these personnel changes have been accepted by the family as a matter of course, and family events are often recalled by their connection with the advent of "the social worker who came to us then." The personalities and vagaries of these social workers often furnish the topics of family conversation, strong points and weak points being duly compared.

The mother is now thirty-three years old. Her many contacts with social agencies have resulted in something more than the wherewithal to support her family. She has an insight that is at times startling, a sense of humor that has helped her through many trying situations, and an attitude toward life that amounts almost to a philosophy. To her the social worker is a combination of counselor, critic, safety valve, and, at times, an alibi for her own neglect to carry out treatment recommendations. Along with an aggressive desire to "get all that is coming" there is a genuine shrinking from the necessity of accepting help.

However, one reaches these conclusions only through looking back over the entire period of social supervision. For the first

¹ From *The Family*, April, 1925.

four years the mother, while not actually antagonistic to recommendations, was not entirely co-operative. Clinic appointments made for the children were often disregarded, and recreational outings planned for them were considered as so many interferences with their household duties. She constantly placed responsibilities on the children which were not in keeping with their ages and she justified her demands by pointing out her own attitude toward responsibility when a girl. The social treatment was not making sufficient headway, and in facing the situation certain questions seemed pertinent: To what extent was the mother's intelligence being used as a factor in handling the social problem? Did she grasp the reasons underlying recommendations, and, if so, was she actually antagonistic to them, but merely assenting because she thought she had to? Was she receiving sufficient recognition and praise for the efforts she was making?

As an experiment, a conscious effort was made to establish a relationship with the mother in which she might feel free to discuss and criticize the worker's plans for social treatment. The meaning of such a relationship was carefully explained to the mother, and her full participation in the plan was apparent in her immediate response: "Yes, I've been wanting to tell you for a long time that I think you are all wrong in the way you are taking Myra away from home so much to give her a good time. It just makes her more dissatisfied with home and she feels she is better than the other children." The recreational outings had been used as an outlet for restlessness, nevertheless, the mother's position was considered essentially sound. In accordance with a new plan, a greater effort was placed upon the girl's adaptation to the home and more emphasis was placed upon recreation for the brothers and sisters.

Perhaps the most tangible result of the change in method was in the attitude of the mother. There was a distinct sense of pride in having her opinion recognized and acted upon. She became more open-minded toward the suggestions made by the social worker. In discussing the plans and explanations offered, and in attempting to criticize them, the mother's interest in her part of the social treatment was stimulated. Upon her own initiative she began to report her management of the behavior episodes of the

children for the purpose of having it criticized, and in each case the weak and strong points of her management were discussed. At the worker's suggestions she read a few books which presented the play spirit in a rather concrete form and she, herself, was taken on several outings. The mother became much more sympathetic toward the play needs of the children and began to use her own initiative in planning for their leisure time. In this phase of the treatment the social worker's rôle has become one of recognizing the mother's efforts. Christmas trees and presents have been duly admired and birthday parties attended.

During the many discussions which have taken place, general questions in regard to social investigation and treatment have from time to time come up for consideration. In certain instances the mother was undoubtedly airing old grievances, but more often her comments were based upon objective observations. These comments were not always of a disparaging nature—as will be seen in her remark, "I could never be a social worker—I lose my temper too quickly." In some instances it was necessary to correct false impressions which were interfering with her acceptance of certain methods of work. For example, in the matter of record keeping there was evidently some feeling on the mother's part that the purpose of it was to "check up things against her." In disabusing her of this idea, the unwisdom of trusting to memory and the value of records in comparing the progress of the children were pointed out. Moreover, her own part in reporting her observations in order to have more complete records was emphasized. A few days after the interview the mother telephoned, "I've just heard that my husband's mother was sick like he was (general paresis) and I thought you would want it in the record so you can understand all about the children."

From the standpoint of the social worker there was no attempt to humor or flatter the mother; the chief purpose of all the discussions was to discover her point of view, and to utilize it in the social treatment wherever possible. The results have been most helpful in this case; and in order that other social workers might benefit by her frankness, the mother was asked to take part in an interview in which definite questions covering previous discussions would be asked. She was told that, to insure

accuracy, a stenographer would record the conversation. In the following account of the interview there has been some re-arrangement and condensation of the material, but as often as possible the mother's statements are quoted verbatim. Such an article as this should not be considered in any sense as a rounded discussion in whole or in part, nor as an attempt to discuss case work methods as such, but merely to present one client's attitude toward a few of them. Whether or not these attitudes are a comment upon human nature, itself, rather than social case work, whether or not they reflect upon social case work methods of today are questions which this paper does not try to answer.

Q. Did you know anything about social agencies in the old country?

A. They haven't got them there. In a nationality like ours they make their own living before they take charity—struggle through somehow.

Q. Why did you want to leave the old country?

A. I wanted to study. I was only fourteen when I came over here with another girl. My father refused to let me go to school. He was old-fashioned. My sister learned him to write his name. People did not believe in schooling for girls—they needed farm hands. My brothers were sent out to learn German. I always wanted my father to let me but he wouldn't.

Q. Did you or your sister come first?

A. She was older than me but I came first. That shows the pluck.

Q. Were you able to study when you got here?

A. When I came here nobody showed me the way. I worked for a high school teacher and he learned me to count but he never mentioned anything about school. My heart was just breaking for schooling. I read at night. I had to work in a thirteen room house for \$2 a week—fifty cents extra if I did the ironing. I saved up enough money to pay my father for my passage money.

Q. Weren't you homesick?

A. I cried at first. But now I feel like I was born here. When I think of my people out there I think it's a dream.

Q. Did you have any dealings with a social agency before your marriage?

A. I didn't know anything about them until the year my husband died. Before that we struggled along. I worked. He stayed home and watched the kids.

Q. What was your feeling about the questions you were asked at first?

A. I didn't like their questions at all. They asked too many when they didn't understand themselves. They usually think you have more than you tell them you have. That's what hurts us. It's really the opposite—you don't like to tell them you have so little.

Q. You mean you want to keep up a front?

A. Yes.

Q. Did you feel that they were trying to pry into your affairs?

A. Yes. One came and said, "Let me see your pantry if you got something in it." She would not sit down and be friendly with you. She sat in the chair—spinster-looking like this [*demonstrating*] and looking around.

Q. That made you feel uncomfortable?

A. Yeh. Sometime you feel like asking them, "Where do you think you sit?"

Q. Did you get over that feeling about her?

A. Yes. Later on she was very nice to me and gave me my share. She found out I had no mattresses and bought some and sent them. I told her I couldn't be handled like that—it hurts. She wanted to know why I had five children, too. She thought I was not very wise—broadminded—to have so many children and a sick husband. In one way she was right, but I said I lived the life, not her.

Q. What about the next worker you had?

A. Well, that was when the baby was born. I got sick on the street and I called up and they sent a substitute. I was in the hospital for eleven days and I didn't know where the children were. They were playing on the street when I got sick. They didn't tell me where they put them or anything. When I got up I found out one was in one home, three in another.

Q. Didn't the worker come to the hospital to see you?

A. No. She had told me she would bring some clothes for the baby but she didn't. My husband was laying on his deathbed at

the time and I couldn't hear anything about him. I found out afterwards the neighbors came to see me but they wouldn't let them in—only nearest relatives can get in a hospital.

Q. Did you ever tell the social worker about the strain you had been under?

A. No, I never had a chance. She went away and dropped the trouble and another one came. Had one right after the other then. I never got very friendly with any one of them.

Q. Do you like being changed from one to another?

A. No, you like one because they find out more. You are always on guard with a new one and can't be natural. If you know she's good to you you lose yourself and say anything.

Q. Did you ever get acquainted with a social worker right away—felt at ease at first, or do you have to go through a certain period?

A. Never right away. You never know which way they are coming. They keep things to themselves and you don't know whether they are trying to take off from you or give you.

Q. What is it that makes you feel most on your guard?

A. Most of them look down on you and that hurts you so you don't want to say any more. They think you are green—immigrant you know. When you tell them you are different you get in wrong. You're always glad when they are gone. You know everybody has a feeling and if your feeling is hurt—!

Q. Is it the usual thing for a social worker to look down on you?

A. More look down on you. She forces herself to be friendly but she doesn't feel it. She can pass you on the street and not know you. Most of them think, "I'm glad I ain't you." If I had had her schooling I could be in her shoes and be just as much as her.

Q. How could a social worker approach you so you wouldn't feel on your guard?

A. The minute they begin asking, I'm on my guard because I don't know which way she is going. If they ask me how my children are, if they are well and going to school I know then she is interested in me and the kids. But if she begins, "How do they help you?" and comes to find out what I'm getting and what I'm

making and what's left, then I feel like keeping things to myself. I found out if you tell them it can't be any worse than it is, they are satisfied.

Q. But if a worker comes to you in a perfectly business-like way and say, "You realize I have to ask these questions," what would be your feeling then?

A. If she said, "I'm sent to ask questions," I'd understand it is a business matter. If she says, "I'm sorry I have to ask you that," I'll say, "I know it's your duty—you have to earn your living the same as me." But when they go into the pots and look what you are cooking and take a spoon and stir it and say it smells good and look around out of the corner of their eye you feel uncomfortable. A social worker did that to the next door neighbor. She thought she didn't have much sense and didn't know any different, but the woman cried about it when she left. And always they have their book and pencil in hand!

Q. How do you feel about that?

A. They hurt you right away.

Q. What is it that hurts about that?

A. I know they are sent to do it but it hurts because they don't understand.

Q. Suppose the social worker came to you and said, "This is about the fifth visit I have made this morning, do you mind if I write down what you tell me?" Would that make you feel more comfortable?

A. Yes, if they tell me before. Everybody has a little sense if they know you work for a living.

Q. You just want all the cards on the table?

A. Yes, play and play fair.

Q. Have you any feeling about having a record kept?

A. No, if a new worker comes and knows all about the family I am relieved. They know I'm not pretending I'm different. I don't like to have the same questions asked over and over. I say, "It's on the book." But there's some you can tell it on their face that they try to catch you in a lie.

Q. You mean they try to check your answer with something you have said before?

A. Yes. Trying to be smart I call it. They want to show me they are higher.

Q. Do you feel that the majority of social workers are stuck up?

A. I couldn't say. But I think there's more than not.

Q. Have you ever felt that social workers pried around too much in things that were your own private affairs?

A. No, they really done good. Some are very interested and do social work always for the health's sake. Some are not interested at all and just come because they are sent. They just try to keep body and soul together. One like that said to me, "If you can go on a vacation you don't need no charity."

Q. Would you rather have interviews at your home or at the office of the agency?

A. In my home. It's more comfortable than the office and sometimes you can take them for a friend. But I like to know when they are coming. It isn't that they ain't welcome but anybody wants to be notified before. They think that we don't know any different but if a social worker comes in without letting us know we call her a rubber neck. We have the names for them the same as they have names for us.

Q. Sometimes a social worker cannot plan her day that far ahead. Often I find myself in a neighborhood and I can save time by making a certain visit then. But maybe I haven't had time to let the person know.

A. If they know that they wouldn't feel you were a rubber neck—if you say you are coming for that. I don't mind it. But if you get a fresh one—she runs in and asks all kinds of questions to see if you are telling right. She's a rubber neck—I can always tell them a mile off.

Q. Suppose you were a social worker and felt that a person was trying to put something over on you when you were away; would you rush in and be a rubber neck?

A. If you see she does that, yes. I'd go there and tell her "I'll come again soon," and then you could run in without being a rubber neck because you said you'd come again. That's a fair warning.

Q. What do you think of getting information from neighbors?

A. They would never tell right. If they are friendly they'd stand up for you. If they have got it in for you they wouldn't tell the truth.

Q. What would you do if a social worker came to you and asked about a neighbor?

A. If it's between a man and a woman I'd say let them fight it out, and I wouldn't say nothing. If children suffer, I'd tell. But I think, ask me first; if I don't tell the truth then go to the neighbors. One day when I was out a social worker came and asked my little boy where I slept and if I had any boarders. She asked the woman upstairs the same things. I don't think it was right that she should ask those. Of course I know they do tell lies and do things but if you hear that from the neighbors you try so much not to have anybody talk about you. Questions like that make people wonder about you; they think the social worker must have heard something or she wouldn't come to ask.

Q. What do you think about going to relatives for information?

A. If we are both willing for them to talk then let them do their own saying. My sister wouldn't be afraid to talk, but if you'd go to her first without me knowing it she wouldn't tell you anything. But one thing I have found out; the more fair you are the more you have to suffer. Whatever you make they take off but if you can show what you need they leave it. But then always you have to tell them.

Q. Do you think that is unfair?

A. No, that isn't unfair. But sometimes you can tell by the questions they ask that they don't know what they are talking about. One will say, "Why don't you do this way? Why don't you buy that?" and you can tell she has never had to manage a house. Then there's things you think you need but they don't think so—like show money—so you have to tell them you bought something else. That's why I never fill out a budget. I ain't afraid but I don't want to put in lies and the truth they don't want to hear. Once when the social worker found we had cranberries—my children all like them—she said, "Why you have a Christmas dinner." We figured up together what she thought was a good plan and hers come to more than mine.

Q. After you figured out that yours was cheaper was she convinced?

A. No, they don't give in. Then they think you bluff. You

know they always get themselves out. If they don't feel like doing a thing they say, "You know that isn't my work." And that hard feeling again—it always comes back.

Q. You feel that the majority of social workers will not own up to it when they are cornered?

A. Usually they don't. But I have been getting along with them so nicely for a good while that I forget the others.

Q. If you get that hard feeling against a social worker do you always keep it?

A. Not always. You get over it when you see her trying to do her best. But when you feel she is not fair it all comes back.

Q. Have you ever thought that so many outsiders coming into your home have a bad effect on the children?

A. I think the kids would be better with less coming in.

Q. How do they like it?

A. Oh they like it. They think of them just as a friend. They say, "They took me here—they took me there." But anything you do to them they think they have a hold somewhere else.

Q. Do you think it makes a mother appear weaker to them and that they do not respect her as much?

A. It does with some kids. And they get to looking to other people for everything. Now my oldest got that way. No matter what I say it don't bother her. When you try to control them they say they have a place to go. "If you don't like me I can go there."

Q. Do you know of anything that the social workers can do to prevent that?

A. No, you can't help that. You do really have to be nice to a child to get her confidence. You can't be mean to her.

Q. Then you think it's just a situation that no one can help?

A. Yes. It's that way when you get money from the outside. You'd think with all the charity we have had I'd be used to it but I never will be. Those four dollars I make when I work are dearest to me. Not that I'm not thankful for we couldn't exist without help, but I will go on my knees when the day comes that I won't have to take money. The kids are already counting on the time when Frances goes to work for then we won't have to accept charity—but she's only ten years old now. Michael always says maybe in two years he can make High School and then he wants

to work. Some of the social workers think I'm not grateful. One day one brought me some clothes. I needed them very much. I walked to the door with her but she didn't give me a chance to say anything—sometimes you are so full, it hurts to take all things. "Oh," she says, "I guess you can say thanks for it." I told her to take them back, but then she saw and said, "I know how you feel." I can't say thanks, thanks, and forget it the next minute. You know it isn't my nature. I always feel it, and then that's why I feel the unfairness so much, too. They don't make you feel like always doing your share. You make two dollars and they take three off.

Q. How do the children feel about being taken on outings? Do they feel that this is charity?

A. Oh no, they enjoy that. Some workers give tickets to picture shows at Christmas but they wouldn't want those. If they had brought me the money and told me to send the kids off to a show they would enjoy that, but give them tickets and they don't want to go.

Q. Do they think it tags them?

A. Yes. I'm telling you, if it's mother's money it's all right but if somebody else gives them money, I have to beg them to take it. But take them to the Art Institute—they enjoy that because that's a friendly act and it's done because they are interested.

Q. If I told Michael I wouldn't give him a Christmas present but would give him some money to spend just as he wanted to, do you think he would mind and would rather have a present?

A. He would rather have a present. Not only him, I think any of mine would. Last Christmas I worked extra and earned all the money for our tree. But all day I dreaded getting the Goodfellows' basket and was sorry I had let my name be put in. You know you can be thankful to people who have been friendly to you, but it's hard to have strangers just drop in on you. They always look the children over and say, "Why, they are real clean and healthy looking," and that makes me feel cheap. And then you ain't supposed to have anything else and one of the kids has to watch out when they are coming so we can get things put away.

PREPARATION FOR AN INTERVIEW—SUMMARY OF A STAFF CASE CONFERENCE¹

Initial Summary of the Case Material

THE Phillips case was referred by the probation officer when Paul, aged twenty-one, was sent to jail with a sentence of four months for breaking into a store and stealing bootleg whiskey. Mr. Phillips has been married a year. His wife, a girl of nineteen years, is pregnant and expects to be confined in three months. The young couple had lived since their marriage with the girl's parents, a comfortable and respectable Irish family.

Mrs. Cummings, the girl's mother, is a very maternal person who has managed the young couple's affairs. A few months before the man's commitment, she set them up in their own apartment.

Mr. Phillips' family was known to the C.O.S. at intervals from 1896 to 1910. His father was Greek, his mother Irish. There was always insufficient income for the large family because of the father's illness. The older boys were considered problems and were placed in institutions. Paul also has a history of truancy and was brought before the juvenile court for sex delinquency. His wife and her family do not know of this background. They are very fond of him and express a willingness to overlook this affair. They feel, however, that should there be any repetition they would "be through with him."

Personality Analysis—Paul

In dealing with Paul, we need to know more about his early life and family relationships. It is particularly important that we discover what sort of persons his father and brothers were, what his relationships to them were, etc., since their examples would influence him in his own male rôle.

¹The New York Charity Organization Society has been trying for the past two years to formulate more clearly and record more fully case work thinking on the individual case. One medium for this experimentation has been conferences of the supervising staff of each district, in which cases are analyzed and evaluated and plans for further study and treatment are evolved. The summary given here was originally prepared by Margaret Ledig and later edited and slightly elaborated for use in the Case Record Exhibit at the San Francisco National Conference of Social Work.—From *The Family*, December, 1929.

We do know from the old record (1896-1910), that *his father* was a respected person working as a janitor by day and tending a fruit stand at night in an unsuccessful effort to support a wife and twelve children. In 1908 he had developed tuberculosis, was no longer able to work steadily, and earned only \$10 a week running errands. *Paul's older brothers* were first noted as ragged and dirty. They were always misbehaving. They lived in very crowded quarters. In 1908 they were regarded as nuisances to the family and the neighbors and on our advice three of them were committed. During these years the threat of commitment hung over their heads, was a recurrent issue, and there are allusions to the way they were "dragged" off to court.

As part of this picture, we have *the mother*, also respected in the community, caring for five houses as janitoress, managing her household, a sick husband, and twelve "noisy" children. Obviously she had to neglect the children. It is not strange they were a nuisance for they were cramped into most inadequate quarters. Their difficulties seem to have arisen from conditions over which the parents had no control. It is noteworthy in this connection that all this family are now known to Paul's wife as respectable, self-supporting members of the community whom she likes and admires.

Paul's intelligence was recently questioned by the court officer. The court record shows that he was only in the 6th grade when he left school at 16. His brother, James, according to our old record, was in the "infant" class at 9. Paul's wife mentions the fact that she has to do all the planning—though she does not appreciate the significance of this. When Paul appears in court, he is silly and flippant. His two colleagues in delinquency are recognized as the real instigators of the theft but his manner and his long-time acquaintance with them are against him.

We find an old court record against Paul (1920). He was brought to court for disobedience, association with criminal persons, and sex misconduct with a girl. He was put on probation but later was committed to truant school (October, 1920-June, 1921). This record is not known to his wife or her family.

He was married in December, 1927, after two years' courtship. His wife's family comment on his love of home and like him. She was attracted to him by his good looks and respectful manners.

His *work record* is good since he started work in 1921. For two years he earned \$35 a week as driver of an auto truck and quit only to better himself. Upon his release after arrest in July, 1928, he worked as assistant superintendent of a clubhouse.

One important question is this: *What is responsible for this present lapse into delinquency?* (1) We have reason to suspect mental defect and the suggestibility accompanying mental defect. (2) Is one reason for the lapse his falling in again with the delinquent associates of his childhood? How are we to protect him from their influence? (3) Was another reason his surrender of the driver's job under a "boss" who liked him and exerted a good fatherly influence? (4) May his wife's pregnancy have had anything to do with his slip? He may have already been reacting to jealousy of a new-comer who would oust him from his exclusive place in her affections. On the other hand his dull mentality would little dispose him to anticipate this diversion of her attention until it actually occurred. (5) Could it have been the removal from the home of her family one month ago? This may have been a factor though we do not yet know that the removal was discussed as early as July. Perhaps their expectation of a baby stimulated the discussion. He liked her parents; they looked after him and her; he is childish and needs direction. At present we can only raise ques-

tions for investigation. We should know what caused the lapse if we are to prevent another.

His poor intelligence is a serious liability. Mental defectives do not learn by experience. He is very suggestible and he has old anti-social habits. He did well in this marriage until he was exposed to temptation. We have to fight against the odds of his bad acquaintances and other factors as yet unknown which counteracted the good influences that kept him straight until July, 1928.

We cannot depend on *his respect for the law*. What respect could he have for it when he had seen his brothers "dragged" off to court for minor offenses? They were punished for their poverty, their crowded quarters, and their natural boyish behavior. It seems quite probable that this early experience may account for that flippancy in court which the probation officer took so seriously that he offers it as one of his reasons for recommending a jail sentence.

Treatment

Paul should be interviewed first. He probably is not completely aware of our official connection with his past, and it should not be stressed. We can be frank, however, about our knowledge of his court record. By careful, sympathetic, but indirect interviewing we may be able to get from him the story of his life at home, his relationships with his family and his attitudes in this present difficulty. It would be well to plan this interview as follows:

(1) A discussion of the hardships of his childhood, stressing his father's illness and the financial strain; (2) school and what it meant to him; (3) from there to his brothers and his relationship with them; (4) finally ending with his own life and problems. There may be the possibility of a "gush of information" in which case this plan would not be needed.

Analysis of Mrs. Phillips

Mrs. Phillips is very sure of herself and her attitudes but when seen with her mother is revealed as a good, obedient child whose opinions bear a startling resemblance to those of the older woman. The visitor believes her "maturity" is probably false and that she is imitating her mother on whom she depends for every decision.

It would be valuable to know more of Mrs. Phillips' relation to her father and her mother's relationship to her father since these will undoubtedly affect her attitude toward her husband and her own married rôle. So far, her father seems to be a "dark horse." He is the dependable economic factor in his home but his wife apparently makes the decisions, buys the young couple their furniture, etc. We should observe these relationships for it is possible that Mrs. Phillips may unconsciously feel contempt or hostility for her father as a comparative cipher in the home. However the evidence points strongly to her finding satisfaction in Paul's "leaning on her," in the fact that she has to "encourage" him when he is blue, etc. She may reflect here the motherly rôle she was familiar with in

her own mother's attitude toward her father. This would be an asset in a case like this where the husband is intellectually a child and has been deprived of motherly attention and guidance in his boyhood. Even so we would have to guard against the danger of making her exercise of this mother rôle too severe or domineering, especially now when she is determined he shall have one more chance and one only. He needs guidance but it should be loving, confident guidance if it is to be constructive.

Her attitude toward this present lapse in his behavior and her feeling that it must not be repeated should be considered. Her family pride themselves on their respectability. She could not have "imagined" this happening. She is afraid of what her relatives will say. If she shows this shame to him and he feels he has lost that confidence on which he has traveled, he is more likely to lapse (we know he may lapse in any event). She does not believe he really committed the offense. She does not know his past record or that of his family. She does not know he has poor intelligence.

Treatment

How much shall we tell her? Nothing in her background or present reactions indicates that she would adjust to knowledge of his "record" or his poor intelligence. She has the stiff pride of the person whose own family met difficulties successfully. Upon discussion it is decided that with careful omission of all references to "records," the deprivations of his childhood be interpreted to her and his consequent need of motherly attention, encouragement, and confidence. If we have already made a good contact with Paul, we can present this information as information gained from him. We must not let her feel she has married a defective delinquent and that she was cheated by appearances, for such feelings will alienate her, destroy her faith in the possibilities of Paul's adjustment, and undermine the confidence and liking which have apparently helped to keep him straight.

Since we suspect that *Mrs. Phillips' mother* directs her, we must not neglect to treat her as one of the important factors in the situation. At this early point in our contact it is simple and natural to take the mother into our counsel, especially since she has played an active interested rôle. Paul's situation and background will have to be interpreted to her. The question is how? She now has a good opinion of him. She has in the past worked hard to maintain a respectable position. The family is proud and has had no experience of courts, institutions, and dependence. Mrs. Phillips appears to be her favorite child, the mother's helper in the family.

In discussing *the approach to the mother*, it was noted (1) that

she must understand Paul's needs without being antagonized or discouraged; and (2) the case worker, in so far as she represents the respectable society of which the mother prides herself upon being a member, may by her own respect and sympathy for Paul do a great deal to banish any doubts about him which the mother may secretly entertain. The case worker will then approach the mother as a person who has been successful in her rôle, whose maternal understanding peculiarly equips her to see (1) Paul's need of support and encouragement after this humiliating experience; (2) those deprivations which he suffered as a child which would make him particularly sensitive to mistrust or reproach; (3) the natural tendency he may now feel to identify himself with the undesirable acquaintances of his childhood neighborhood if he feels thrust out of the affections of the family. Anything "disreputable" in his past must be suppressed. Instead, his family's struggle against illness, poverty and the burden of a large family should be alluded to and their victorious emergence emphasized. Moreover his happiness and success in the marriage should be partly attributed to her and her daughter. The fact that he and his family have achieved more than ninety-nine people out of one-hundred would achieve under such overwhelming handicaps should be stressed. We want to keep not only Mrs. Phillips, but her mother as well, in line, since the latter will probably largely control the former.

Paul's family should be visited just as soon as our visit with him furnishes indications as to the best and most influential informants in the group. To visit them now is natural. To visit them later when he is no longer in acute trouble may be to sacrifice the co-operation they would extend in a time of crisis.

Their memory of the C.O.S. will probably not be happy but we can dissociate ourselves from that past by making our reason for seeing them our interest and confidence in his "coming back" successfully. We will show quite casually our respect for his good work history, his successful career in marriage, and our respect for them as people who have standards. In getting information we shall proceed from safe topics, drawing them conversationally from one point to the next without appearing to "investigate."

His brothers, with their common background, may be able to

explain his recent associations, offer suggestions about keeping him away from the old gang, etc. We want however to keep in mind the possibility that the brothers themselves may be keeping up some of these old undesirable associations and may have exposed him to temptation in this way.

What do his family think of his present trouble? What have been their attitudes toward him? Have his present friendly relations with his own family dated only from the time of his marriage? What was his part in the family life from the time he started to work until he married? What is their impression of his wife's people and his standing with them? Did he seem to like or dislike living with them? Was he a favorite or not with either parent or any of the brothers and sisters in his own group?

Throughout, in handling a situation involving both sides of the family of this young pair, we should make it casually apparent that we do not intend to "carry tales" back and forth, that we respect the privacy of the Phillips family, and that of course there are many things which it is not necessary for Mrs. Phillips' family to know. This attitude on our part should release them to talk freely.

THE CLASS TEACHES ITSELF¹

HELEN P. KEMPTON

FIELD experience is coming to occupy an increasingly important place in any training plan; it is the indispensably valuable element of apprenticeship training, an element which has been taken over by the schools of social work and given additional worth through supplementary class discussion.

The young student often approaches case work with the idea that it involves an entirely new type of relationships from those offered by ordinary life. He has little conception of what these relationships are and still less of the part he himself will play in them. This attitude of course is characteristic of many older persons who have no knowledge or understanding of case work; but in the young student fresh from college the attitude is more subject to modification because it is the result of ignorance rather than of the preconceived ideas which may figure in the thinking of more mature individuals. To change this attitude, then, and to encourage the student to give case work a fair start, by thinking of it and the relationships involved in terms of his everyday life, has seemed to me an important starting point in teaching. Once this change of attitude is effected, it seems to orient the student in case work, helping him to objectify and analyze his experiences without self-consciousness, and so gradually to improve his methods of procedure.

The field experience must bulk large in class discussion if the latter is to have any practical value. At the same time it is important to guard against the introduction of specific questions of procedure and practice which might infringe upon the prerogatives of the field supervisor. It is a familiar truth that what one discovers for oneself has an added zest. In describing a field experience the student touches upon many subjects profitable for discussion in a case work course; the class is quick to take up these suggested leads, and the principles arrived at register because they are timely and spontaneously introduced. By planning assignments carefully with frequent revisions as the course advances and the program shapes itself, the instructor may build from the

¹ From *The Family*, April, 1929.

output of the students themselves a fairly comprehensive course on methods in case work.

In a recent teaching experiment I tried the plan of devoting part of every period to laboratory discussion of field experiences. In making the assignments I asked for individual reactions to contacts rather than for content of interviews, and in selecting reports to be read to the group I have excluded those without this subjective value.

At the risk of introducing the obvious I am going to give by way of illustration extracts from a few of the reports which I have used in class, with the substance of the ensuing discussion. Assignments called for first-hand experiences; the four covering the papers selected were:

- (1) Describe your first field visit.
- (2) Give an illustration of observation and inference.
- (3) Describe a treatment interview.
- (4) Describe an interview conducted against difficulties (environmental, psychological, or language).

First Field Visit

The first visit I made was with the F family. The man was suffering from a chronic spine condition, which prevented him from supporting his family (consisting of his wife and three young children). Our organization had assisted the family for a time and then established Mrs. F at a candy and newspaper stand, opposite her home. This made the family almost independent of financial aid. Mr. F was to assist in keeping the stand when his condition permitted.

When the case was assigned to me, Mrs. F had already begun to express dissatisfaction with the arrangement. I called at the stand first, expecting to find her there, but instead, her mother, a woman of about seventy, was in charge. I did not stop to discuss matters with her, after inquiring for Mrs. F, because I felt it advisable to become acquainted with the family first and to get a better knowledge of the situation, and I proceeded directly to the home. I found that the family occupied a four-room apartment on the second floor of a large, old fashioned tenement house. Mr. F was in bed. He seemed pale and flabby. After I had introduced myself, he asked me to wait for his wife, who was out marketing. He made no effort to converse and I did not press him. I was glad of the opportunity to observe the surroundings and from my position I had a view of the entire apartment. The bedrooms were very small and were inadequately furnished. The dining-room and kitchen were fair sized and poorly but amply furnished. On the whole the home was clean.

Mrs. F returned shortly after, with some groceries. I had no difficulty in establishing a friendly contact because Mrs. F was aware that she was to have a new worker and was anxiously awaiting my visit. She gave me a chair between the kitchen and Mr. F's bedroom so that he could join in the conversation. Mrs. F immediately launched upon the subject which

was most important to her, *i.e.*, the stand. She asked that it be taken from her as soon as possible because she could not shoulder the entire responsibility of managing it and, in addition, care for her household. Mr. F could not help her, as had been expected, because his illness kept him in bed most of the time. The long hours were exhausting her, her hands and feet were swollen and she feared a recurrence of a former diabetic condition. When I suggested that her boys, who were 14 and 12 years old at the time, might help her, she replied that they could not be relied on, as they became engrossed in play and passers-by would steal from the stand. I then asked her in regard to her plan for maintaining the family if the stand were taken away. Mrs. F thought that the organization should support the family until she regained her health, then she would make plans for working. I was disappointed at her desire to become dependent again. There was a long discussion on the value and importance of maintaining independence, though it might mean some hardships, until the children were old enough to work. I urged that before Mr. and Mrs. F definitely decided to relinquish the stand, they give the matter further and more careful thought. Both Mr. and Mrs. F agreed to wait. Mrs. F who at first had complained that she could not spare the time to go for a physical examination, agreed to keep the appointment which I would arrange for. Mr. F also agreed to accompany me to be examined by his doctor and to follow the latter's advice as to whether or not he should continue to remain in bed most of the time.

In the discussion following, there were some who believed that the student should have taken advantage of the opportunity offered to talk with Mrs. F's mother and with Mr. F in the period before Mrs. F's return. Others felt that she did wisely in waiting for Mrs. F before beginning her purposeful inquiry, while a third group suggested light conversation as a means of getting acquainted with Mrs. F's mother and Mr. F, in the interval when she had to mark time. All considered that the student's observation of the home was inadequate, and that she should have included some reference to details in furnishings, pictures, or ornaments as indicating something of the F's tastes and preferences. Some of the group considered that the interview was conditioned by Mrs. F's dependence on the organization and—to an even greater extent—by her knowledge that it is a relief organization, her limited conception of its service function and of the nature of case work, generally speaking. This opened up the question of methods of relief administration as determinants of the client's response and reactions, and illustrations were given of relief in work, in groceries, and in cash (delivered by the visitor, or in check payments under an allowance plan). This led further into the question of ways and means of safe-guarding the self-respect and independence of the individual receiving an al-

lowance, and the importance of emphasizing to him his part in the transaction, making of him an active participant instead of a passive recipient. Carrying this idea beyond its application to the relief question, as suggested in the latter part of the interview, some one in the group brought out the importance of placing upon the client maximum responsibility for making the plan wherever this is possible and of leaving him free to make his own decisions.

Observation and Inference

A young woman had accompanied Mrs. M and acted as interpreter for her when she first applied at the district office for relief. She explained that she was a friend and neighbor and gave her name. This was done rapidly and she was uncertain in spelling it. I saw her frequently at Mrs. M's home and she came to the office many times. She explained much of the family situation in detail without consulting Mrs. M. Although at first I accepted the statement that she was a friend, I thought, after knowing her better, that she was more familiar with the family's affairs than the usual friend. She gave a very plausible account of the reasons why Mrs. M's married daughter could not help the family, and after calling at the home of the daughter several times without finding her, I began to think the "friend" was perhaps the daughter. There were several bits of supporting evidence to this hypothesis: There seemed to me to be a resemblance between Mr. M and the young woman, and the name of the married daughter as given to me, was similar to the name of the "friend." I finally told the young woman that I had never succeeded in finding Mrs. M's daughter at her home and asked directly if she were not the daughter. I received no reply to my question which was met by evasive counter-questioning. In a later conversation with the young woman, I referred to Mrs. M as "your mother." She then asked how I had discovered the fact of their relationship and gave her reasons for withholding the information.

The class considered that the working of this report reflects clearly the student's thinking. They noted that suspicions were aroused by the interpreter's manner, by her uncertainty in spelling her name, by her evident familiarity with the family's affairs and by a too vigorous defense of Mrs. M's married daughter. This led to a discussion of the "working hypothesis," to quote Miss Richmond, and the extent to which it may influence thinking in the course of an interview. To strengthen the tentative suspicion, aroused by the foregoing incidents and held for confirmation, came the supporting bits of evidence as noted in the report. The student, at this point, felt that she was justified in acting upon her established hypothesis and tried the direct method of approach, asking a point-blank question which failed to draw a frank response. She then resorted to third degree methods—on which the

group were divided as an ethical proposition—some considering it justifiable in this instance, others disagreeing. Those who considered it justifiable pointed to the results obtained as a proof of their contention; this was challenged by others who maintained that in case work the end does not justify the means.

A Treatment Interview

Mr. L is temporarily dependent upon our organization because he is neurotic and run-down and was compelled to relinquish his trade—a very difficult one. He was sent away for convalescent care and now the problem is to make an employment readjustment.

I discussed plans with Mr. L who had no suggestions to offer. He is so anxious to become financially independent that he is ready to follow any plan I make, *i.e.*, either to take a job at light, unskilled factory work, or to learn a new trade.

Before making a definite decision I wished to interview one of his brothers who is interested in the family, but who avoided my efforts to see him. I wanted to see him for several reasons. He could give me additional information on Mr. L's background, including employment history; I was interested to know what suggestions the relatives would have to offer in regard to an employment plan; and furthermore I knew that this brother had a large circle of friends and was active in several organizations. Through his many connections, I believed he would be able to assist me in finding the right kind of work for Mr. L.

Mr. L's brother came to the office at last in response to a letter stating that I had a very important matter to discuss with him. His attitude at first was belligerent. He took pains to inform me immediately that he is not at all like his brother, that he is an entirely different type, and moreover that it is entirely out of the question for him to contribute toward his brother's support. His attitude changed and he became very friendly after I had assured him that I had no intention of asking him for money for the family (I knew that he was in no position to help financially), and that he need not be ashamed of his brother, that the latter is in his present unfortunate predicament only because of ill health; and further that if my estimation of him had been low, I would not have taken the trouble to seek his advice. He was immensely pleased at this, became entirely at ease, and gave me the required information about Mr. L. As to employment, it had never occurred to him to make inquiries among the people he knew, because he had taken it for granted that the family organization would shoulder the entire responsibility. He seemed interested when I explained the true nature and purpose of the organization. He was strongly of the opinion that his brother should be re-trained and promised to make inquiries about certain trades and to confer with me again as soon as he had anything definite to suggest.

This report precipitated discussion of the use of relatives in treatment, in securing history, for financial help, and for planning and other responsibilities. This led to an airing of the whole question of kinship ties—their potential value to the individual in some cases and, on the other hand, the harm that

may follow the mistaken emphasis and use of these ties in treatment. Finally the discussion turned on the various methods open to the student for acquainting the client with his reasons for wishing to consult relatives, this eventually leading to the whole question of the interpretation to the client of the case work job and the student's function. The final principle suggested by the report was the importance of interpreting to the source used in treatment the nature and purpose of the work of the organization. They agreed that this represented one of the case worker's community responsibilities.

Interviews under Difficulties

Called on an aunt of three children who were left homeless. The father was confined to a hospital and the mother had died. The aunt was a woman of late middle age, motherly in manner, and interested in her relatives. She immediately entered into the conversation and proceeded to give information without any hesitancy. She railed against the treatment the children had received at the hands of the paternal relatives and cited incidents showing that they had been neglected. One easily noted the hostility entertained for the other members of the family.

At the close of the interview she began to describe her own troubles, asking me to advise her and it was necessary to terminate the interview since no more helpful information could be obtained and since she was determined to speak about her own worries.

This led to a consideration of the student's responsibility when the source used in treatment seeks advice, and of the importance of remembering that the source is an individual whose rights the student must bear in mind. One member of the class reported that he had once sought financial help so zealously from a certain near relative of his client's that he had overlooked the palpable fact of the relative's own slender income and inability to contribute. Another discussion point suggested by this report was the extent of information about the client's affairs which the student should give to the source. Here the point was made that there is a certain obligation due the source (second in importance, of course, to that due the client) and that this is definitely increased where the student in seeking re-employment for an individual or interviewing a relative or friend under certain conditions. The group unanimously condemned imparting information about the client to a source, whether through carelessness or through the desire to propitiate the source and grease the wheels of conversation.

Abe L, 19, was employed as shipping clerk in a large button factory, until three months ago, when he suddenly found himself out of work. He was indefinite about the cause of his dismissal and since he was the chief support of the family, the situation was a serious one.

I called upon his employer one noon after lunch, hoping to find him placable at that hour, and explained to him frankly the circumstances of the family. Mr. R was immediately interested and sympathetic and said that the boy had been too proud to reveal the story to him. Abe in a moment of rashness had signed a note for a friend, guaranteeing a loan of money which he later had to make good. Since he was unable to produce the money, his salary had been attached. The affair was unpleasant and Mr. R, without more ado, had dismissed Abe. I sought his support and promised to make arrangements whereby the boy would pay his debt independent of his employer. As the result of these arrangements, Abe was not only reestablished in his position, but was given a salary increase of two dollars a week.

This interview suggested the ethical question of consulting an employer without the consent of the client. The student explained that, although consent was not directly asked, there was tacit understanding on the part of the client that the employer was to be seen. She went on to say that he seemed unwilling to talk the matter over frankly with her, and evidently preferred to have her get the story from the employer. Some members of the group questioned the validity of tacit acceptance as a substitute for absolute consent on the part of the client to a plan in treatment; others felt that tacit acceptance is equivalent to consent and avoids the danger of the negative response which is sometimes engendered by a direct request for permission to proceed.

Mrs. H reported that her husband had been away from home the entire week-end, taking his salary with him. Mr. H was a bricklayer and earned \$77 weekly on a full time job. Defections of this sort had occurred a number of times of late and he always returned very much intoxicated and very ill. She thought a good talking might make him behave. They have two small children—boys. Mr. H usually returned home about the middle of the week.

I visited the home and was told that Mr. H had been home for about two days. Mrs. H happened to mention that her husband was exceedingly fond of the children and that any threat to remove them from the home might frighten him into better behavior. I asked to speak with Mr. H alone and was shown into the bedroom where he was sitting. He greeted me most politely; said he had been out all day looking for a job and was worn out. Mrs. H left the room and shut the door. As I had seen neither Mr. nor Mrs. H until just now and had never before had a case of alcoholism to deal with, the trend of my conversation with Mr. H had to be planned on the spur of the moment. I decided at once that moralizing and lecturing would be out of the question, because Mr. H looked like the kind of man who might become sullen and defiant, and I wanted his co-operation from the start and wanted him to know that, although his wife had reported him to us, we were eager to help him overcome his problem and to be his friend, too. I began by talking to him about bricklaying; this led

to the question of unions. Mr. H described the trade in a very interesting manner. The question of drink I purposely avoided until the middle of the interview. After I had learned that he was a musician and a college graduate, and something of his early life, I told him why his wife had come to us, and this brought on a business-like discussion of the drinking question.

Mr. H said he had only been away from home a few times, but that he always came back and his wife had become unnecessarily excited about him. I replied that her anxiety seemed to me justified, since he had gone off with all the money when the rent was due, and she had had no idea where he was, or whether he ever would return; he admitted she probably was right, but she might have known he would always provide for the children. It was the bad liquor nowadays that affected him. One glass intoxicated him and then he did not have enough self-control to stop, but kept on drinking. He had no knowledge of what happened on these sprees and always returned home the minute he "came to." I mentioned the fact that he was running a dangerous and foolish risk from drinking wood alcohol. Mr. H replied that he realized this. He further said he was thinking of taking up music again, to play in an orchestra and knew he would have to keep sober for this. I said that since Mr. H wanted to give up drinking, we would do all in our power to help him and asked if there was anything we could do to be sure of his returning home the following week with his money. Mr. H said that this would be a good time to put some of his plans into action and he could assure me everything would be all right and I need not return again. I told him that I was planning to be out of town for a week, but would come to visit him immediately after my return, just to remind him of our conversation. This would give him two week-ends in which to get a good start. He had previously stated that he felt no craving for drink and could stop for months at a time if he wanted, or if there were no friends around to tempt him.

Mr. H said that his wife had told him that our organization wanted to put his children in a Home—a move which he would not think of allowing. I explained that we never removed children from homes unless we found that they were not receiving proper care or that the parents were unfit guardians, and that the greater part of our work was to help keep homes together. I went on to say that in his case there were all the elements of a good home, unless he kept on leaving this way. Under those circumstances, the little boys would not have the right kind of parents and there would be no money for food; that Mrs. H as a parent was not sufficient, for the father was needed as well as the mother.

A long discussion followed this report. The first point made was that the student showed wisdom in rejecting Mrs. H's suggestion as to the best method of approach to her husband and in choosing her own. By seeing him alone and opening the conversation in a friendly way the student made him see that she was not prejudiced. She accepted him as her client, in spite of the unfavorable introduction she had had through Mrs. H's story. Favorable comment was made on the student's choice of subject in starting the conversation, calculated to give Mr. H a sense of security. Many members of the class characterized this as only

common courtesy, a few felt that it was insincere, roundabout, and unbusinesslike, and that a direct approach to the main issue would have been better. All felt that Mr. H's readiness to agree with the student's statements was not to be relied upon as indicative of a constructive attitude. All agreed that the entire absence of emotional emphasis and the businesslike handling of the question of drinking were distinct assets in the situation. The majority felt that the student was justified in her adroitness in proceeding on the assumption that Mr. H wanted to give up drinking and meeting him on that ground—putting the words into his mouth as it were—although he had not expressly so stated. Other points brought out in the discussion were the skill in leadership evinced by the student's leaving Mr. H to take full responsibility for his own behavior in a preliminary period of probation, and her closing the interview with an encouraging, positive note, pointing out the important place that Mr. H fills in the family life.

Visitor, accompanied by a student, called at Miss A's temporary residence. She was living with friends, the S family, until some other arrangement could be made for her. The apartment was located in a poor section of the city. The rooms were clean and neat, but rather overcrowded with odds and ends of furniture. Miss A was reclining on a cot in a small, crowded living room. Mrs. S accompanied visitors into the room and remained throughout the interview. Later, Mrs. K, an interested neighbor, joined the group, and still later, Mrs. K's married daughter followed suit.

Client was continually interrupted by one or more persons volunteering information, contradicting her statements, and making the interview very difficult. Visitor was finally forced to postpone the interview to a later date.

This report suggested for discussion the advisability of visiting in couples, and the question of the observer-visitor. Several students who had tried visiting as observers described their own uncomfortable sensations and the unfavorable reactions of the client. Some said that if the situation presented an emergency problem their presence apparently was not noticed and did not obtrude upon the interview, but they felt that this was due only to the client's absorption in the matter in hand. Comparison was made between the observer-visitor and the participant in a group conference, the client being one of the conferees. All felt that in a group conference the fact that every one present has a share in the proceedings, and hence a legitimate reason (in the eyes of the client) for being present, obviates any disadvantages or difficulties.

The report also called forth a discussion of the various ways and means of getting rid of chance callers during the visit and, all efforts in this direction failing, the advisability of postponing the interview if possible.

The record of the S family gave the following information: They came to the attention of our organization when Mary S had her first illegitimate baby at the age of thirteen. We took her and the baby under care and had her committed to an institution for the feeble-minded, from which she had returned four months before the time of this interview. The mother and children had been very much of a problem for the last six years, because she constantly had affairs with other men, leaving her husband and children and then coming back and taking up her home in any place that she could find, whether with the poorer whites in some of the undesirable parts of the town, or with colored people of bad reputation, until finally Mary's younger sister Ethel (now 12), was removed to a boarding home. Walter was left with the mother, although at that time conditions in the home were anything but promising, as the mother was promiscuous and the father was a nonentity as far as his family was concerned, drinking heavily and not caring what happened to the children. In 1926, Ethel was returned to the home because, according to the record, the S's had gone back to living together in a fairly decent neighborhood and although Mrs. S was supposed to be feeble-minded, she was apparently keeping a good home. Shortly after this Mr. S died, and the last visit was made immediately after this, six months previous to my call.

After reading over the record, my plan for the interview was in general (1) To re-establish relations with the family (I thought that this was probably going to be very difficult because they had never welcomed our supervision of the children and had keenly resented Ethel's removal). (2) To get as much information as possible on the present situation.

I arrived at the door of a two-story frame house in a poor but not bad neighborhood and Mrs. S came to let me in. I explained that I was a new worker at the C.A.S. and she rather reluctantly let me in and without saying a word led me back to the kitchen. Much to my disappointment there sat Mary and a man whom I later found to be a boarder. I felt helpless, for none of them showed any signs of moving. I did not feel like asking to see Mrs. S alone as I might have done had I had a previous contact; furthermore, the kitchen was apparently the only room which the S's had downstairs. I sat down and talked about the weather and other commonplace matters for a few minutes and then in answer to something Mary said, I took rather a long chance and mentioned the institution which she had just left, asking her about a friend of mine who had worked there a short time before. I figured before I asked that she might dislike very much to have the institution mentioned, but it seemed my only chance to break into the conversation on anything touching the family. Mary did not know the girl, but her face lightened at mention of the place and she said that she had had a letter from the superintendent that morning and how glad she had been to get it. That gave me a good chance to ask if this superintendent had helped her to find her present job in W— and just what she was doing. She said then that she was working in a laundry and liked it very much. I asked her about the hours and, finding that they were long, asked her if it paid enough to be worth while, whereupon, much to my surprise, she told me how much she earned. The mother then said, "Yes, and she gives most of it to me every week, else I don't know what I would do for I cannot do many washings

any more, I am so worn out. That's why Mary is home today. I had one of my heart attacks and called her home from the laundry." I said, "And do you manage to make that do for all of you? You must be a wonderful manager." She beamed and said that "Bill here, paid his board regular," and helped out a bit when rent day came around and they were short of money. Upon this, Bill became more friendly and talked quite freely about his work, how long he had known Mrs. S, and so on, at last mentioning the younger children. At this I asked how they were getting along in school and whether Walter was still subject to spells.

All through the interview I had the feeling that I was on probation with the family and that, if they rejected me this time, all future work with them would be distinctly hampered. I was not yet sure what this future work would be, but I did want the path left open. Perhaps I was putting it on too personal a basis, for what I really wanted them to feel was that I had come from interest, not to spy and find out what was wrong, so I let the conversation go on almost without interruption on my part and acted the part of someone who just happened to be there and took part in whatever came up.

I gained little in this interview except a picture of the family as it now was, the house they lived in, their finances, and a suspicion that the boarder's status might be doubtful.

I did not ask directly for any information, and yet most of it seemed to come out the way I hoped it would. I purposely did not wait to see the children for I wanted to have that as a reason for my next call. I felt, from later interviews, that the way I somewhat blindly took in this case was the best one, for later Mrs. S confided in me freely and told me that she had liked me ever since the first visit because I had not tried to find out a lot of things that were none of my business. The curious part of it was that I really left knowing the very things that she had considered "none of my business," and she herself had given me the information in an indirect way.

This report brought forth an animated discussion with a considerable amount of favorable comment. In the first place the student was commended for preparing herself for the visit and for the nature of her preparations, the point being made that it is important to have one's objectives clearly in mind beforehand. At this juncture, one student gave an illustration of too-minute and detailed sailing directions, given by her supervisor before a visit, which had handicapped her because she had focused exclusively on these objectives and consequently missed several important issues. The group approved the student's way of introducing herself to the family, knowing, as she did, that the cordiality of her welcome hung in the balance; and they also approved her method of opening the conversation, disagreeing with the student when she said she felt "dumb" in starting the interview with the introduction of commonplace topics, and pointing out that an entering wedge of this sort is calculated to give a sense of ease. The student was also commended for following the various leads

offered by Mrs. S, for her tactful way of framing questions, for following the tide instead of attempting to direct it, and for her evident personal interest in the whole affair. Her "long shot" (to use one of Miss Hamilton's phrases) in praising Mrs. S for her good management, was approved in this instance, although some students gave illustrations of the use of flattery—not encouragement or deserved commendation—which seemed to them not justified as a tool. The class felt that the student's attitude and bearing in this case were important factors in contributing to the client's favorable response.

Armenian family consisting of a divorced woman with five girls: The record had included some data on social history, ages of children, date of family's arrival in America, at Worcester, and at New York, and dates of marriage and divorce. Some of the work history had been obtained and there was reference to Mr. K's cruelty to his wife.

A general conversation opened my visit. Mrs. K was very much interested in her present trouble and "history taking" was somewhat hampered by this. I started the conversation toward her background by asking if she had been in America long. She told me that she had come over when she was five years old with her mother and sisters to join her father and brother who had come some years before. She then spoke of a visit to Armenia and of her marriage.

I felt distinctly uncomfortable during this visit and was conscious of directing questions by the rapid fire method. It was with great difficulty that Mrs. K was led to discuss her past history though she answered specific questions very readily. There were many interruptions to the interview as Mrs. K frequently stopped to do things for Mary, the youngest child. She was concentrated and responsive so long as the conversation was directed toward that which seemed to her the main objective, *i.e.*, help in getting steady work for herself and her daughters. She was obviously unwilling to talk of Mr. K, although I tried to lead her to this again and again. I left with the feeling that the visit had been a failure.

Here it was brought out that the client's absorption in the immediate emergency or "foreground problem" (to quote Dr. Cabot) presented a difficulty to the student, and there ensued a consideration of ways and means of drawing the client's attention away from the foreground problem when the odds are not too great. As some one in the group remarked, "if the house were burning down you could not expect the client to settle down to a dispassionate discussion of social history"! The question of language difficulty, and of methods of securing an interpreter were also discussed; the use of children and casual neighbors or slight acquaintances as interpreters was voted down. Leading questions that suggest the response and direct questions calling for an oversimplified reply were discussed at some length, and finally the

class centered on favoring the use, when possible, of such questions as are suggested by the client's own remarks (illustrated in the previous report). Other points brought up in discussion were the advisability of frequent recurrence to a difficult or taboo subject, the alternatives to such recurrence, and finally the question of racial background as determining this client's attitude toward any discussion of marriage, marital difficulties, and divorce. It was mentioned that the Armenians are intensely conservative on the whole question of the position of women in society and of matrimony, and that Mrs. K's reluctance to talk on the subject of her husband's defection was entirely natural.

The four assignments represented by this selection of papers (less than an eighth of the papers turned in) comprised only four weeks' work, a third of the introductory case work course. In the total of twelve assignments a wide range of discussion points was opened up. Full details, supplementary to the reports, were available, as no report was presented to the group unless the student responsible for it was present.

This method of study has seemed to me to provide a flexible sort of textbook suitable to the subject and valuable as a supplement to the intensive record study to which half of every period is devoted. It relates the student's field experiences directly to class discussion, synchronizing the practical and the so-called "theoretical" approaches to case work. Furthermore, it brings home to the student a full realization of the part that he himself plays in every field contact, without inducing an attitude of self-consciousness. This realization seems to me to be as essential a preliminary to any attempt on the part of the student to appraise or evaluate his own work or that of others, as it is to a broad conception of the scope, content, and meaning of social case work.

AN EXPERIMENT IN STUDENT TRAINING¹

FLORENCE SYTZ

SOCIAL work has not, as yet, developed a method of teaching its processes to new workers or to students with any degree of effectiveness. One serious handicap of course has been the scarcity of case material written in such a way that it shows method. Social case work has a large amount of accumulated theory and an infinitesimal amount of recorded process; hence the dilemma of the supervisor in any social agency when faced with a new worker or student in training. In 1922 the American Association of Social Workers, recognizing the need for articulation of the processes of social case work, stated in a pamphlet on "Social Work" that "emphasis must be placed on process as an aid in keeping in mind the fact that not what is done, but how it is done, is what constitutes the test of professional activity." If then it is believed that the distinction between the so-called "trained" and "untrained" worker is not so much in what is done, but in how it is done, it is obviously necessary to find some way to show the method used in dealing with case situations.

Mrs. Sheffield has opened one avenue of approach in her outline for recording the process interview. This outline lends itself admirably to teaching purposes as its use makes possible a glimpse of the worker or student in action. The length of the interview, written according to Mrs. Sheffield's plan, the time it takes to write such an interview, along with the questionable value of such subjective-objective information as this system of recording emphasizes, all tend toward making the outline impractical for wholesale adoption. A limited use, however, of the outline by students in training has been found helpful in the Illinois Institute for Juvenile Research in understanding and estimating the student's progress in the practice of psychiatric social work, as well as in furnishing a background of material necessary in the formulation of a method of individualized instruction.

Before attempting to write a process interview the students were given "Reflective By-Products of a Social Treatment Inter-

¹From *The Family*, April, 1926.

view"² to read and it was agreed that in general the form of the outline should be followed. In order to avoid a too early crystallization of ideas, the question of the analysis of the interview was left entirely to the student, as it was thought that to talk in terms of "attitudes" might, especially in the beginning of the training period, lead to a stilted, meaningless juggling of phraseology.

The interview we present was written by a student from the Smith College School for Social Work, a month after beginning her field training at the Illinois Institute for Juvenile Research. This student had had a course of eight weeks in the theory of psychiatric social work but she had had no actual experience in any kind of social case work.

The situation with which the student was attempting to cope was presented by Mary Smith, a twelve-year-old American girl, living in a small town in Illinois, who had been brought into court on account of sex delinquency and forgery. The history, as given by the family welfare society, showed that Mary's mother had been sexually promiscuous since her marriage; her father was described as a "heavy drinker" and a man of "high temper." The judge of the local court in which Mary appeared arranged for her examination in Chicago at the Institute for Juvenile Research.

In the psychological examination Mary was found to have high average intelligence; her school record coincided with this rating as she was in the eighth grade and doing satisfactory work. The psychiatrist recommended foster home placement in Chicago under the supervision of the social service department of the Institute for Juvenile Research. This plan was approved by the local court for a six months' trial period and Mary was brought to Chicago and placed in a foster home. The placement proved unsatisfactory and so, before the end of the six months, Mary was transferred from the foster home to a small club for girls. The local court was asked to extend the period of Mary's supervision and it did so against the wishes of Mary's parents.

On a Sunday morning, the student was visited at her home by Mary, Mary's father, mother, and baby brother. The student's

² "Reflective By-Products of a Social Treatment Interview," by Helen L. Myrick and Ada E. Sheffield, *Journal of Social Forces*, May, 1925.

record and analysis of the interview which took place at this time follows:

About ten-thirty Sunday morning there is a ring at the door and shortly after the landlord appears to tell student she has callers. Student hastens into the living room and is astounded to confront Mary surrounded by her family, rumors only of whose visit to Chicago had reached her. (Mary had on one occasion asked student to point out her house, consequently she knew student's address.)

Mary rises and introduces her father and mother. She conducts this little ceremony as if the occasion were the most correct of social calls and she the most well-bred of débutantes. Hands are shaken all around, and student, bewildered with the suddenness of it all and in order to give herself time to collect her scattered wits, launches the conversation upon banalities.

Student: Well, I am glad to see you people. Mary must be too. She was hoping you'd come; getting a little lonesome, eh, Mary?

Mary: Yes, indeed, I should say I was glad to see them.

Mother (A little bit of a wizened-up thing, holding a big baby, which greatly resembles her, on her knee, speaks up in tones of exaggerated amiability): We're glad to be here. We were coming away sooner, but we weren't able to get started. Mary, here, didn't know we were coming. She didn't get our letter—we wrote it last Sunday, too.

Student: That's too bad. But the main thing is that you're here, isn't it? Is this the baby I've heard so much about?

Mother: Yes, it is, poor little fellow. He's tired from the trip.

(Baby whines a bit, and landlady comes in and coos at him offering to take him to the kitchen. He is, however, retained.)

Student: What sort of a trip did you have?

Here both parents launch into a joint description of the "excursion train." The father mumbles and grumbles about its slowness and the mother exclaims about how hard it was on the baby. Mary remains quietly seated by her father, who goes on talking about Chicago. He too is little and dried-up looking; both the mother and father are shabbily dressed. His manner of talking, though dogmatic and grumbling, does not arouse the antagonism in the student which the sugary, false-sounding clucking of the mother stirs.

Father: I used to work with the Service Lumber Company and come every month to Chicago. I know this place well, I do. I have no trouble in getting about.

Student: And how do you like where Mary is staying?

Father: Oh, I guess it's all right. I've only just been there though. We would have come up before only we've been moving. We've got a house all of our own now.

Then follows a few banalities about the trouble of moving and the weather; finally there is silence. Since Mary's family do not introduce the subject for the day, student is forced to ask:

Student: Well now, Mr. Smith, what do you think about Mary's staying here in Chicago?

Mother (chipping in): We think it's time she came home. Her six months is up now and she should be home.

Father: That's what I says. We want to know when she's coming home. Judge, he said, six months when he sent her up here, and that six months is up. Miss Brown now she tells me something else and Miss Ames she says something different to that. I went to the Judge, I did, and I says to him "Judge, I got to know what you're going to

do with my daughter. They all tell me different." An' judge, he says, "Smith, you're a hard man to talk to; you get your mind all set on one thing. But I got to send her to State School if you don't do some things they ask." I moved into a house of my own, just where Miss Brown asked me to. What I wants to know is, what you're going to do about it. When a man is sentenced to the "pen" for six months, he goes. And when that's over he comes out.

Student: But don't think about it that way. Mary hasn't been sent here as a punishment.

Father: Well, she done what she done, and she has to pay for it. What I want to know is when it's going to end.

Mother: Yes, indeed, when is it going to end!

Father: Her mother here has a little baby and no one to help her. She needs her at home.

Mary: I certainly should be at home helping my mother.

Student: But, Mr. Smith, don't compare Mary's stay here with a prison sentence.

Father: Well that's what I'd get.

Student: But she's just a child, and children don't commit crimes.

Father: Well, I s'pose. . . .

Student: We just want to do everything here for Mary we can; we want to keep her here until we're sure she'll do well at home, the way you want her to.

Father: (interested) Yes, I know the way she should go. We knew nothing about her being out nights. Miss Brown, she thought I didn't know what was what because I'd been around a lot; lived in different places. But I've lived steady in Illinois since I was married. I made her see I knew something.

Student: I'm sure you *do* know what is right. And it's most important that you should feel that we're trying to give every chance to Mary. You saw Mrs. Scott, didn't you? She's a nice woman. She looks after Mary well there, and it's my business to see to other things concerning her—school, and things like that.

Father: Oh, I'm sure you mean to do well by her. She's there with girls that know right from wrong. I think she's better there than that place she was before. I wasn't satisfied about that.

Student: Yes, I think she's better too. Then you have nothing to worry about the expense, because you are not having to finance her. You weren't worrying about that, were you? You know she really is having an unusual opportunity.

Father: Well, I didn't know about that at first, but it's better now. I guess she is getting more things than I could give her.

Student: Oh, I'm sure you'd do what you could for her, but one can't do more than one can afford.

Father: That's true; I'm only a working man, you know. I can't do much for her.

Student: You said you had a new house. Is your mother-in-law still with you?

Father: Oh, no, we'll never do that again. We just stayed with them because they wanted company. Miss Brown wanted us to leave and we did.

Father here launches forth on a long account of the business deal which resulted in the taking of the new house; all of which the student does not catch on account of his mumbling and because she is so uncomfortably conscious of Mary's reaction to the recent discussion of her affairs. Mary had wiggled and twitched on the couch beside her father and finally had got up and gone around to play with the baby. She and her

mother talk about home affairs and tweet the baby who threatens to storm. They have finally to stand up to keep him quiet, he subsides to some extent, but is still cross. In a pause in the father's torrent, student rises and turns to the group standing.

Student: He must be tired. Is there anything I can get for him?

Mother: Oh, it's all right, he's just sleepy.

Student: And how do you find Mary looking?

Mother: All right, but not much different from what she was before she came.

Mary: I gained ten pounds. I weigh 120.

Mother: I hardly weigh half that. I just weigh 86 pounds.

Mary: (*belligerently*) You'd be a lot fatter if I were at home to work as I should be.

Father: (*still leaning back of couch*) And I've lost a lot of weight these last few months. I sure have. I've been worried.

Mother: Yes, he certainly has.

Student: That's too bad.

Mary: Well, I guess we'll be going. Are we going back there? (*i.e., club*)

Mother: We won't eat there, but I want to go there.

Mary: (*impatiently*) What are you going to do? I have to phone her if we don't come back.

Mother: Well, I want to go back and get some things for the baby, but we can have dinner some place else.

Mary: Well, then, I won't have to use *her* slug (*telephone coin*).

There is almost a malicious sharpness in the tone of this remark. Worker wagers Mary has little affection for "her," meaning Mrs. Scott, matron of the club. Party has now moved out onto the landing at the top of the apartment stairs.

Father: Will I not be seeing you again?

Student: Well, I'll be at the office in the morning.

Mary: He means before he goes—he's going tonight.

Student: Well, then I'm afraid not.

Father: You see, I didn't want to miss time from my work.

Mother and Mary start downstairs at this, but the father lingers. Worker calls good-by to Mrs. Smith and Mary calls out quite heartily, "Good-by, Miss White."

Student: You *do* feel more satisfied now you've seen everything, don't you? You know, I do so want you to feel how very anxious we are to help Mary. We don't want to confine her, and we don't want to set a definite time, because we want to be *sure* she's all ready to go back when she goes.

Father: Now, that's all right. I don't mind. I says to myself before I came up here "I'll just see what they think; if they go on talking the way you've been talking I'll say to them, 'You can have her.'"
I didn't like that other place she was, but I'm satisfied now. She's getting a good chance.

Student: Yes, you do understand, don't you, that it's going to take time. We wanted her away from her old environment—you know, the boys she went with and everything—long enough so that she'll get other interests and acquire new habits.

Father: I understand—I understand.

Student: Then you feel you can leave it to us about the time?

Father: Yes, I do. You'll let me know? But you'll be writing to them. You let them know and they'll let me know.

Student: I certainly will. Good-by, and I'm so glad you came to see me.

Student and father shake hands and he trots downstairs to join his wife and children who are waiting below.

Impression: Mary's mother appears to be a weak-willed, wheedling, little bundle of misery, and her father a man that must be coaxed. Mary's tone toward her parents is distinctly dictatorial; her superior size may have something to do with this.

Student's Analysis of Interview with Smith Family

The suddenness with which this situation presented itself to the student did not contribute to her poise in handling it. She was aware, however, that the family welfare society considered it important that the Smiths should receive a favorable impression of Mary's surroundings, and of the people with whom she had to deal. She, therefore, summoned all the wits she had to her service.

The introductory discussion of the train, and so on, did give her a chance to find her bearings; it also gave her a chance to demonstrate her friendly interest in Mary's family. She did not gather from the preliminary conversation what attitude they were taking toward the object of their visit, so she waited for them to introduce it. When, however, the conversation strung on for so long about nothing in particular, she felt that they were waiting for her to speak first. It occurred to her also that if she brought up the subject herself, they might feel that their wishes were being consulted, or at least were objects of interest to her. She therefore asked their opinion of the situation and released the torrent of their doubts, fears, and recriminations.

The father alone was talked with since he seemed more promising; student felt that any change effected in his attitude would be less ephemeral than a change in his wife's who might say anything to be agreeable. He seemed to want to discuss the matter. The mother's attitude, on the other hand, while friendly to the point of sugariness, seemed to be dominated by an emotional set against the "injustice" she felt was being done her.

In her anxiety to "get across" to the father the idea behind the Institute's treatment of Mary, the student made an almost exclusively emotional appeal. Mere statement of the Institute's aims seemed hardly to catch his attention. But when she sat on the edge of her chair and said earnestly that she "*did* want him to *feel*," he grew almost gracious. Indeed, he made concession after concession. He seemed to like it very much that somebody "*did* want him to *feel*" and it seemed to stimulate his intelligence to a grasp of the point of view offered to him.

Though this conversation was carried on partly in private. Mary overheard the first part of it. This was an ordeal for her. The student felt uncomfortable about it, but could not think what to do with her. She herself partly solved the problem by talking to her mother.

No impression was made upon the mother. After putting in a few emphatic remarks, she ignored the discussion altogether. She seemed almost to be angry that student was winning fair words from her husband.

Student felt that Mary was annoyed with her success, and she was more than glad when she heard the cheery good-bye from the bottom of the stairs. In the final talk with the father, student made a definite effort to make him state explicitly his willingness to leave the matter to her. He did this.

In an attempt to learn how much an interview, written according to the Sheffield outline, contributes to an understanding of the worker's method, the student was asked to rewrite the in-

terview as she would have done had she not been using the outline. Her choice of pertinent information which she believed worthy of recording follows:

October 4, 1925. Student visited at her home by Mary, Mary's father, mother, and baby brother.

This visit is made on Mary's initiative; her parents arriving unexpectedly in town, she brings them over to see student. Her father complains of the indefiniteness of Mary's "sentence" and the way one person tells him one thing and another, another. Student tries to impress upon him that Mary is not in Chicago as punishment, but in order to give her an opportunity away from home to do better. He admits that she is well treated at the club and is getting more than he could give her, but her mother needs her at home. Mary's mother here puts in her word, "Mary should be home." After Mary and her mother go downstairs the father says he is satisfied with student's attitude and is willing to leave it to her to decide when Mary is steady enough to go home. He realizes what she is trying to do, he knows "what's right even though some people think he does not." He will expect to hear of Mary's progress through Miss Brown.

Impression: Mary's mother is exerting and will continue to exert all her effort to get Mary home. She has a powerful sentimental pull to work with. The father seemed really satisfied when he left to leave Mary in Chicago. He appears slow in getting ideas, but he impresses student as tenacious of them once they are acquired.

It is apparent that this rewritten version of the Smith family conference records only the results of the conference and omits the details of the part the student played in securing these results. We are told what happened, but now how it happened; the recorded account of the interplay of personalities in the rewritten interview is cut to the minimum. From this rewritten version it might be concluded that the student secured Mary's stay in Chicago through the use of a rational presentation of facts, whereas her interpretation of the process interview tells us that she attributed her success to the use of an emotional appeal. Students, in attempting to be objective in the handling of situations, are often inclined to ignore the use of the emotional appeal; consequently when the use of this appeal forces itself upon their attention they dismiss it as a tool lacking in dignity and therefore not to be talked about, but only to be used surreptitiously. This can be avoided if it is recognized that there can be no objection to the use of an emotional appeal, if such an appeal is used consciously and purposefully.

In order to use case work processes consciously and purposefully, students must be encouraged to develop an experimental

attitude toward case work and the part they play in the processes involved. They must, of course, acquire a technique which implies, according to Professor Dewey, the formation of habits with little regard to the meaning of what is done, but in addition to the acquiring of a technique it is necessary that students be encouraged in discovering ways of showing the interaction between the means used in case situations and the ends obtained. To do the latter, the stimulus afforded by the experimental attitude is necessary.

It is believed that an expanded use of the Sheffield outline, such as is illustrated in this paper, is an aid to the student in developing an experimental attitude toward case work. The use of this outline enables us, in a rough way, to catch sight of what has been called the "subjective process behind the objective sequence."³ The subjective process is a very real and important thing to the student, and this subjective process can be a dynamic process if a way is opened for its articulation in group discussion. Such a way seems to be provided through the use of a subjective expansion of the Sheffield outline.

³ *The Meaning of Social Science*: Albion Small. University of Chicago Press, 1910, page 195.

GROUP ANALYSES OF THE INTERVIEW

About 1925 several local chapters of the American Association of Social Workers and other groups began to make intensive studies of interviews and to analyze interviewing processes. Out of these efforts came some most valuable material. Outlines for recording interviews helped to focus attention on the processes then in use in persuading clients to action, in changing attitudes, and so on. Structure and purposes in the interview became increasingly apparent; psychological factors emerged; methods of stimulating interaction took shape.

Reports from the New York, Chicago, and Minneapolis chapters are here presented.

INTERVIEWS, INTERVIEWERS AND INTERVIEWING¹

BRADLEY BUELL

“‘MARRIED?’”

“Yes.”

“Children?”

“None.”

Here, without doubt is the amoeba of the interview. Its highest development may well be such an interview as that in which a most efficient case worker skillfully led a well-to-do business man to acknowledge an illegitimate child as his own—and co-operatively plan for its future. Or another in which, on a Sunday afternoon, fifteen minutes of absolute silence, while an old lady rocked and told her beads, was the strategic step in breaking down the barrier of antagonism to removal to an old ladies' home. In between we find every variety of conversation and combat. What, then, is an interview? How is it? Why is it?

For two years a committee of New York social workers, originally organized by the American Association of Social Workers, wrestled with these questions. Most, although not all, of the members were case workers, and the material on which

¹ From *The Family*, May, 1925.

their discussions were based was largely taken from case work interviews. Their conclusions are extremely tentative—in fact, “observations” is the word used in the final report. Yet it seems not too unreasonable to hope that they may be at least suggestive to similar studies elsewhere.

At the beginning of the first year, a study of the authorities in social work—personnel administration, psycho-analysis, salesmanship—revealed a meagre literature—most of it relating to the so-called “art” of interviewing. Writers on personnel administration had pretty well standardized the physical circumstances under which an employment interview was most likely to be successful—privacy, comfort, the use of illustrative material, charts, and the like. Salesmen were taught “how to get in the door,” when to unpack their brief case, and other handy tricks of the trade. The psychoanalysts, as might be expected, emphasized the danger of “forcing matters,” the need for establishing “mutual understanding,” of using the “association” method, and the like. Similarly, it was possible to list from the experience, testimony and discussion of the case working members of the Committee several pages of isolated points which seemed pertinent—such as “finding common interest,” “giving information as a means of getting reactions,” “filling in time,” “frankness to gain confidence,” “breaking down inhibition,” and so on. In other words, if interviewing were an art, here were some of the brush strokes which in given pictures had enabled the artist to get the result she desired.

Gradually, however, members of the committee commenced to feel that there was more to it than this. The interview itself began to emerge as a process in which certain elements were always present and in which simple and predictable things always happened. This was confusing—and it still is. Yet it has been clarifying to the committee, in writing their final report, to make this sharp distinction between the interview as a process—as the interaction between two people, if you will—and the technique or the art of controlling and directing the process. It seemed—and it took the committee a long time to get to this point—that to talk about guiding or directing a process before the process itself was fully understood was putting the cart before the horse.

Most of their report has little to do, therefore, except by implication with the "art" or "technique" of interviewing—but rather with the more abstract and, in a measure, hypothetical "process" of the interview itself.

Two things contributed to this point of view: (1) Rather well along in the first year the committee began to analyze individual interviews. Each member, after some fresh interview with a client, would transcribe it from memory in as much detail as possible; then, picking out the points which seemed to her significant, present it to the committee for discussion. During the second year one member actually had her stenographer take down verbatim an interview in her office (without the client's knowledge, of course). While further interviews of this latter kind would have increased enormously the value of the committee's work, yet even the consideration of interviews transcribed from memory forced the committee to think inductively—to deal with first hand material rather than generalizations—and if there be any new contributions in their report, it is unquestionably due to this procedure.

(2) Some brilliant member of the committee made the unique discovery that the interview always involves at least two people.² So important did this seem that the opening paragraph of the report reads:

The committee believes that it is important to recognize that an interview does involve at least two people. For the purpose of sound analysis, the psychology, personality, motives, and interest in the particular interview of one is of equal importance to the other. The interview itself, as a process, is *a synthesis of the actions and reactions of each*.

No doubt, as with all definitions, this will fail to hold water, yet having stated first of all that the interview is a process and, secondly, that of the two people who were always involved B was just as important as A and vice versa, the committee proceeds to emphasize further the point by acknowledging the exceedingly unscientific character of its own method of study:

An interview is a process in which two people are involved, but at none of our meetings has the second person been present during the committee discussion. The member presenting the interview has been able only to guess what was in the other's mind—obviously an unscientific procedure.

² The committee found that when more than two people were involved a whole set of new and complicating factors entered in. It therefore confined itself to the simplest process.

How to accomplish the elusive ends of science, the committee does not say, but this emphasis on the equality of both parties throws into sharp relief the distinction between the "process" and the "art" or "technique." Perhaps the ideal scientific procedure would be to have an interview taken verbatim, analyzed and discussed at one session by A, with B absent, and at the next by B, with A absent. But the difficulty if not the impossibility of securing such material is obvious, for it is clear that an interview must be bona fide to be worth anything at all. The knowledge on the part of even one of the two people that a stenographer is taking notes is a complicating factor.

So much for the dual nature of the process.

In the early stages of the committee discussion, the members who were good case workers attempted to classify their interviews according to purpose, as "treatment" interviews or information-getting interviews. This didn't get far. A "treatment interview" would suddenly disgorge information—and there were those with the temerity to insist that treatment frequently began in the very beginning of the first interview. A listing of specific purposes such as "persuading Johnny to go to school," "securing the marriage certificate of Mrs. S," get nowhere. Yet purposefulness seemed one of the things which distinguished an interview from mere conversation—and it was impossible to escape the feeling that the purpose or purposes in any interview profoundly affect its entire character.

The conclusion of the committee on this is at least suggestive and goes back again to the discovery that, while in a given interview the case worker may have a definite and formulated purpose, the client may also have one. The significant thing from the standpoint of the interview as a process, the committee concluded, was the relation between the two.

It proposes the hypothesis, then, that in all interviews the purposes of A and B are either :

1. *Complementary*, e.g., where the purpose of A is to get information and the purpose of B to give it freely and without qualification;
2. *Supplementary*, e.g., where the purpose of A is to get information and B to give it freely—but where B wishes, in addition, to accomplish some end of his own; or
3. *Contradictory*, e.g., where A desires to get information—B to conceal it.

Again the committee anticipates that this will not stand the test of higher criticism. In many interviews the purposes of A and B change repeatedly throughout the interview. Perhaps the concept of purpose is entirely wrong—there was indeed at one point in the committee discussion a suggestion of distinction between “purpose” and “reason for the interview.” But the hypothesis is an interesting one—and may be more suggestive to the development of an art or a technique of interviewing than such a classification at “treatment” and “information getting.”

The remainder of the committee report follows logically. Having decided that interviewing is a process and that it is purposeful, it tries to analyze the factors or the ingredients which enter into it. Then an attempt is made to set forth the steps or stages in that process. Finally, digressing somewhat, the committee considers one point which seems to it to be of primary importance in the development of skill or technique.

In regard to the factors which, the report says, “seem to be involved in the process of all interviews,” the thirteen points which are listed in the committee’s report can be roughly divided into three groups: First, the physical setting of the interview: The surroundings of an interview can give one or the other person an advantage of impression, of confidence, of initiative; they may give both parties a feeling of ease and comfort; in unlimited ways they influence the entire proceeding. This hardly needs to be stated to be evident and the literature about it is considerable.

There is, in the second place, always A and there is always B: the kind of person that A is—the personality which is the product of his heredity, his background, his history, his life experiences, the things which appeal to him, which antagonize him, the language he understands—together with exactly the same set of factors in regard to B. Here is the basic material out of which the interview comes. And as a corollary to this, the committee puts down another set of factors regarding A and B, namely: the particular mental and physical state of each at the time of the interview—fatigue, nervousness, pre-occupation, pressure of other obligations, and so on. Who, for example, has not tried to interview some busy person whose eyes were continually

filling with that far away look which unalterably testifies that his mind is on his golf score—or some equally important matter rather than on the question in hand? Who has not tried to “put something across” in an interview with his own mind similarly distracted?

In the third place, there is always “what A knows and what B knows”—even though with one or the other it may be nothing at all; what A knows about the personality of B, and vice versa; what A knows about the immediate situation influencing B, and vice versa.

In one interview presented the worker had to wait for J to get out of bed before interviewing him. She was emphatic that the fact she knew he hadn't had his morning cup of coffee was pertinent to her conduct of the interview.

The knowledge which A and B have of the facts bearing on the purpose of the interview—and how much A knows that B knows, and how much B knows that A knows. For example—lest this last seems too far fetched—the case worker in the interview referred to knew, from the mother, that the man with whom she was talking was the father of the child. She also knew that he did not know that she knew. He, on his part, was entirely unaware that she had this information—in fact, he never knew it.

Out of A and B, the knowledge which A and B have at their disposal, and the physical circumstances which surround them, the interview comes. On the next point, the steps or stages in the process, the report is considerably less adequate. Briefly, four are suggested:

- (1) Steps leading up to the interview.
 - (a) Formulation of purpose.
 - (b) Specific preparation.
- (2) Introduction.
- (3) The high point—or points—in the interview.
- (4) Conclusion.

To elaborate a little, the committee felt that somewhere the interview had to begin and that “in one of the two people must originate an effective purpose as the first stage in the process—otherwise no interview would ever take place. The willingness (or even the unwillingness) of the second person to have it take place is in itself at this stage a purpose.” That this first step is subject to infinite practical variation—from an interview which

both mutually anticipate, arranged for by letter and the like, to that made possible by a casual meeting at the club or in the subway—is obvious, but somewhere the process has got to start; and that start, it seemed to the committee, is bound up in some fashion with the initial formulation of purpose.

In regard to the next step, specific preparation, the committee believes that there is some specific preparation for every interview—different in the case of A and B. It may involve careful and detailed planning, with all three factors (setting, personality, and information) taken into consideration and the purposes of the interview (each from his own standpoint) carefully analyzed; or it may be nothing more than an instantaneous mental shift from whatever is being attended to, to the next step—the introduction. It may be a somewhat different psychological process, a more conscious “clearing of the mind,” a “getting set” for the initial contact with the other person.

About the next stage, the introduction, the report says: “. . . This would seem to include not only the actual first contact between the two people (the handshake and the ‘How do you do’) but it may also include preliminary conversation on matters more or less unrelated to the purposes of the interview, but which has the definite purpose of laying the basis for *rapport* between the two people.” This whole matter of introduction was the subject of repeated discussion. “Approach” was one of the terms used to describe it. “Fencing for position” seemed to fit a certain type of interview; “leading up to the matter in hand” was another. But that the actual commencement of the interview constituted a separate and recognizable step seemed to the committee clear.

Perhaps it will be impossible to make the next point clear for the committee itself was by no means clear on it. The report says:

In each of the interviews studied by this committee it has been possible to visualize a graphic curve, rising with varying degrees of rapidity to a point which has always been definite and ascertainable; receding from that to the conclusion or end of the interview. . . . The committee believes that in some interviews the chart might, instead of a single curve, consist of a series of curves.

About the elements which determine either the curve or the high point the committee has reached no conclusion, although the high point has

seemed to coincide with the definite or visible expression of the purpose which either A or B had in the interview.

This is, of course, quite mysterious and intriguing—particularly as the committee made no effort to chart any of its interviews after this fashion. But in the one verbatim interview which it discussed the entire committee, including the worker whose interview it was, were able to agree on the exact line where the interview came to a focus, where it “headed up,” and it was possible to trace beyond serious question, on the one hand, the steps which led one after another to that focus and, after it, to the steps which, consolidating the position, establishing agreement, picking up loose ends, led away to the conclusion. In the interviews discussed there always seemed to be a place where the committee felt, “Now the secret is out,” sometimes in the very beginning, sometimes not until the very end. But in each case there was the feeling of rising and falling around this point. As a hypothesis only the committee suggests it for future verification.

About the last stage, the conclusion, the committee says little where it might have said much more: “That every interview comes to an end seems obvious—yet the way in which the conclusion is made may be extremely significant from the standpoint of the ultimate accomplishment of the purposes of either A or B.”

This completes the committee’s contribution to an understanding of the processes of the interview as such—its characterization of purposes, its analysis of the factors which enter into it, and its suggestion of the stage through which it goes. All these ought to be suggestive to the development of a sound technique of interviewing which can be communicated through training and experience. Planning in advance, clarification of purposes, marshalling of facts, the set up, if possible, of advantageous physical surroundings, are all part of it. The committee, however, under the heading, “Control of the interview,” makes one particular contribution to this subject:

By control the committee means “having the interview in hand,” conscious direction on the part of A or B toward the fundamental purposes which he may have—and here is the greatest field for individual skill, for the development of the art of interviewing.

(1) Where and when the purposes of A and B are complementary, control by one may be active and the other passive, but each from his own standpoint has the interview in control.

Where and when they are merely supplementary, at variance, or in opposition, active control passes from one to the other, and is the factor for which each is contending.

Culled also from the several pages of tricks, or means which each member of the committee testified to have used in accomplishing her purpose, the report sets forth:

That there are at least three fundamental methods to be used in directing or keeping control of an interview.

- (a) Establishment of confidence (*rappport*) by such means as:

- Using the colloquial language of the person.

- Tying oneself up with his past experience.

- Letting him feel that he is leading the interview.

- Putting him at ease.

- Revealing one's own interest, and so on.

- (b) Definite stimulation to reach the purpose desired, such as:

- Presentation of facts intended to get a certain response.

- Use of word association.

- Contradiction.

- Promises.

- Presentation of final question.

- Leaving something for persons to do.

- (c) Recognition, evaluation and utilization of new material appearing in the course of the interview.

Ability to do this is perhaps the most important single thing in keeping the interview under control.

This latter point is, we suspect, worthy of a report in itself—as indeed are most of the other points.

In all fairness, there should again be emphasized the extreme hesitancy with which the committee prepared any report at all. Some of its members were of that school of thought which disapproved entirely the formulation of hypotheses lest they be taken as proved conclusions and translated into dogma. But fortunately—or unfortunately—the majority were of that school which believes the formulation of hypothesis, no matter how tentative, to be the essential precedent to criticism, reinvestigation, and the ultimate formulation of principle and truth.

Finally, the whole two years' experience of the committee, entirely apart from whatever intrinsic value its findings may have, illustrated the possibility, value, and something of the method of group discussion. But that, again, is another story.

PSYCHOLOGICAL PROCESSES IN INTERVIEWING¹

HELEN L. MYRICK

HOW do the emotions, behavior, attitudes, prejudices of clients and social workers, as shown in their actions, affect the processes of case work? These factors are always inherent in the interplay of personality as this interplay appears in the conversation between worker and client, but their significance is not always recognized. How do we become conscious of them, articulate and control them in the case work interview? These are a few of the questions puzzling social workers in this day of enlightened ideas regarding human motives and behavior. Several groups of social workers have been studying the question systematically, perhaps the most recent one being the Sub-Committee on Interviews of the Committee on Professional Practice, Chicago Chapter, American Association of Social Workers.

This committee, which has met every two weeks for six months, has studied the question theoretically and has also experimented with case material. It used as its starting point ideas and forms previously worked out by the New York committee of the Association on interviews, the Minneapolis group of family case workers, and a national committee on case work processes led by Mrs. Ada Sheffield. In order to benefit by her studies on the question for the Research Bureau on Social Case Work of Boston, constant exchange of ideas has also been carried on with Mrs. Sheffield. Attempts have been made to obtain reports from other groups but have met with no response. The same is true of bibliographies: the only ones which could be wrenched from any groups were sent by the School of Social Service Administration, University of Chicago, and by Mrs. Sheffield.

Besides analysis and discussion of interviews, an article or book has been reviewed at each meeting in an effort to cover the literature relating directly to the subject. In order to have a common understanding of terms, definitions from various sources

¹ From *The Family*, March, 1926.

See also *Interviews*, American Association of Social Workers, Studies in the Practice of Social Work No. 1.

have been worked out and discussed. In addition to definitions listed in the outline, the terms "process" and "method" have been studied and these definitions agreed upon: method is the plan of treatment; process the execution; dynamics is the force which keeps one going after being motivated. The psychological phases of habit also have been delved into and discussed. Experiments in analysis of verbatim interviews have been limited to those of persuasion. As a result of this study, the following outline for the purpose of recording technique and the client's reactions has been evolved. In the sub-headings are given the various elements in the worker's technique upon which discussion has centered.

Outline for Recording and Analyzing Interviews

Purpose (When interview was previously planned, include in Interview rather than in Discussion.)

Physical Setting (home, office, persons present)

Approach (may include manner, rapport, motivation)

Rapport (Making friendly contact.)

Revealing one's interest

Putting interviewee at ease

Tying up with interviewee's past experience

Letting interviewee feel that he is leading interview

Using colloquial language.

Development of Interview

Coping with Attitude (definition of attitude: "the elements of an attitude are thinking, feeling, wishing, conditioned by early experience"):

Allowing release of emotions

Dealing with fears

Meeting of objections

Presenting of facts to get certain response

Contradiction

Promises

Presenting impossible plan

Letting interviewee present own plan

Exaggeration of interviewee's suggestions

Reassurance

Interplay between personalities other than interviewer and interviewee

Reasoning

Contrasting plans

Informing

Consideration of difficulties

Presenting a possible solution

Compromising

Planning

Turning Point (indicates crisis in conversation which may not be marked but always occurs)

Motivation (definition: inciting action)

Use of Incentives:

Appeal to prejudices:

- (a) Personal
- (b) Group: racial, national, religious, political, labor, social clubs, etc.

Interests

Ambitions

Pride

Ideals

Weaknesses

Desires

Tastes

Esthetic sense

Sentiment

Sense of humor

Sense of justice

Altruism

Use of Comparisons

Recognition, evaluation, and utilization of new material appearing in course of interview

Practical action of interviewer

Obtaining interviewee's help in details

Presentation of final question

Clinching with definite suggestions

Leaving something for interviewee to do.

Discussion of Technique (definition of technique: "the style of performance in any art"): The discussion is an analysis, interpretation, and synthesis of the interviewer's method and the interviewee's reactions. It should trace the development of rapport, indicate the ways in which the interviewee's attitude was dealt with and the interviewee motivated. The factors which caused the turning point and which subsequently brought about the change or lack of change in interviewee's point of view should be stressed. In considering the effects and results, the following points should be brought out:

- (1) Show effect of interviewer's interest. For example, did it make interviewee talk more freely, flatter his ego, make him feel important?
- (2) Indicate the attitudes in interviewee which interfered with interviewer's establishing rapport and gaining free discussion of the difficulties.
- (3) Indicate reasons for and results of following interviewee's cues. For example, is it a means of showing interest, getting new facts, learning interviewee's attitudes? Does it make interviewee feel effective and assured?
- (4) Show not only the effect of presentation of facts but also the result. For example, does it give interviewee insight into her situation as a whole and take account of factors she had overlooked?
- (5) Does appeal to incentives and coping with attitude result in making interviewee feel more effective, assured, over-assured, ineffective, more diffident, etc.?
- (6) Did the interviewer persuade the interviewee to take over without modification the plan the former had in mind?
- (7) Did the interviewer bring interviewee to compromise somewhat on his own plan; or did interviewer agree to compromise on hers?
- (8) Did the two between them think out a plan of action which em-

bodied the best ideas of both but which was different from what either would have thought of alone?

- (9) Did the interview leave the situation worse than it was before (it would never be the same as before)—the interviewee angry, or suspicious, or stubborn?

Explanation of Outline

The *main headings* in the outline are to be noted in the margin opposite the phase of the interview indicated. The *subheadings* in the outline give suggestions for its use and also include various kinds of technique involved in case work interviewing. These terms are merely suggestions for use in the Discussion of Technique only, and need not appear in the margin. The list is tentative and incomplete—any other methods used by the worker in her interviews should be added. The marginal notes are merely a guide in reading the record; the discussion is an analysis of the worker's technique and the psychological results with the interviewee. It appears as a separate paragraph following the interview. The illustrative interview² shows the use of the outline. The situation is given to make the interview clear as an illustration and is not necessary to put in the record.

Illustrative Interview

Joseph, an unstable boy of thirteen, considered by the psychiatrist in danger of developing a psychosis unless removed from his home, had spent part of his summer vacation on a farm. Consent had been obtained from both parents to allow him to spend the winter. Although the home is inadequate there is no question of immorality, so that court action is not possible and foster care for Joseph depends entirely on the parents' co-operation. However, his father is a suspicious, evasive Greek and his mother is an hysterical woman of very low grade intelligence and no sense of truthfulness so that no decision is easy to gain or possible to consider final. She has repeatedly demanded Joseph's return in spite of the fact that previously she had readily consented to the plan.

During the past winter without the worker's knowledge, his father had enrolled Joseph in a course in mechanics in a pay school. By the school record it was shown that he attended irregularly throughout the term and his scholarship was low. The superintendent advised that although the school admits students of any age, Joseph was too young to profit by the course of lectures which is the only thing open to first year pupils.

Interview

October 7, 1925 Mrs. Mores came to the office at one-thirty with Paul. She was very angry and glowered at the worker. She first handed worker a letter from Joseph. Worker jokingly asked

² Interview by Annette M. Garrett, United Charities of Chicago.

Physical Setting her if she didn't like to have him eating apples off the tree. Paul interpreted that it's all right for a person to go away for a two weeks' vacation, but not to stay all winter. There was a great deal of excited conversation about \$55 invested in the Dane School, and that Joseph was to come back so as not to waste that money, and that the children had to stay away from school today because they had no shoes, because they had spent all their money on the school. The worker offered to ask for School Children's Aid shoes but Mrs. Mores refused angrily. Over and over again she excitedly demanded Joseph's return, and insisted that if he is not back by the end of the week she will go after him.

Presently the worker engaged Paul in conversation about himself, his school, and George. Then he was asked about his stay in the country. His face beamed as he talked about the good time he had, but when he was asked if he would not like to stay there all winter he answered, in the same words that he had interpreted for his mother earlier, "It's all right to stay for two weeks, but not all winter." However, he did not appear

Manner of Interviewee to believe this very sincerely. Mrs. Mores sat glowering during this conversation and when the talk was allowed to revert back to Joseph she remarked that her real reason for wanting him back was because Mr. Mores insisted on his coming back to go to Dane School. The worker, assuming that this was true, said, "That's right, Mrs. Mores, you tell me the truth about it and we can work out some way together, I am sure, to give Joseph this splendid chance. If

Coping with Attitude Mr. Mores tells you that Joseph can go back to Dane School, he is mistaken because that money has all been used up long ago and they will not take him back unless another \$50 is paid. When you pay your milk bill in advance two months of course they won't go on delivering milk four months." This had been said before when Mrs. Mores was excitedly demanding his return, but it did not have any effect until now. Then the

Motivation worker told her that Joseph is in 8B, that he has an ex-school teacher to help him every night with his lessons and that if she leaves him there he will graduate. While she was insisting that he had been in the 8th grade in Chicago, the worker jokingly remarked that she knew he had not come within a mile of the 7th grade and would never graduate in Chicago, because he will not go to day school, and he is too young to get along in Dane School. At this point the worker was called to the telephone. When she returned after ten minutes Paul

Turning Point interpreted, "My mother says Joseph should stay out there where he can graduate from school and have a teacher help him with his lessons every night and not be bumming around here on the streets and getting into trouble stealing, and

that if my father beats her she'll hide under the house and that scares him because he thinks she is going to leave him." Mrs. Mores still sat soberly by. The worker took her hand and enthusiastically shook it, exclaiming, "That's the way to talk, that's fine. Now we'll stick together and see that Joseph has a chance to graduate and learn to be self-supporting, so that he can help you at home." Mrs. Mores' face was all smiles and after

Motivation a few minutes the worker asked her to come upstairs and see the children in kindergarten. They were asleep. Mrs. Mores tiptoed about interestedly, saying over and over again, "It's just like a hospital," and as soon as she was out in the hall she asked if she could bring the children. Then she asked for suggestions about work, saying that she is so used to working that she does not like to stay at home. Mr. Mores has spent all the money buying all the fruit and vegetables he

canned, and now it's too early to sell them and so they have not any money. When she was saying that she was afraid her husband would get a divorce if she insisted upon Joseph's staying away and the worker said, "Oh, he wouldn't do that after all these years," Paul said, "Yes, he would, my mother looks old, she's had so many children and works so hard, and he's a young looking man, he doesn't look over 25."

Then the worker told Mrs. Mores how badly Joseph needs clothes and asked if she could not send his sweater. She was anxious to send it but knew that her husband would not let her. Evidently she arranged with Paul in Greek that he would pretend to lose the sweater, for presently she announced that she would send the sweater into the office within the next few days and winked at Paul. Then she offered to send a good tailored coat which she had gotten from Community Center for Josephine last year, and a sweater. She wanted to wash the sweater though, and when she thought of that she became very impatient to get home and get at it.

Discussion of Technique

The interview was unpremeditated and so had no planned purpose except that the conscious purpose of the worker for weeks had been to persuade the family to let Joseph remain in the country. The worker first sparred for time, seizing upon parts of the letter which could not possibly be objected to—attempting to break through Mrs. Mores' negativism. There was no outward indication that this was successful and Mrs. Mores was allowed to purge her mind. Her objections and complaints poured forth and the worker constantly tried to meet them or redirect them. Although unsuccessful in guiding the conversation, the effect of catharsis was showing faintly in that Mrs. Mores could not keep up quite such a rapid torrent of words. Feeling that further argument was useless, the worker engaged Paul in conversation which could not be regarded unfavorably by Mrs. Mores, yet ignored her temporarily. This also was a kind of catharsis, giving her time to let her anger drain off in silence. From this time on the interview moved forward. The worker had control. Mrs. Mores' objections could now be accepted as sincere and an attempt made to meet them by reasoning and presenting of facts which earlier would not have been heard. A practical comparison about the milk bill was used. The real turning point came with the response to the worker's presentation of the facts about Joseph's possibilities of school success. This appealed to racial pride and an ideal, and, at least for the present, Mrs. Mores was won over. The worker seized upon her temporary abandonment of negativism to make her actively do things. She was shown the nursery, not because getting the children there was the immediate goal, but because she had before refused to come near it or let herself be interested. Finally she was left with something to do, not because of the worth of Joseph's old clothes which she might gather up, but because by so doing she was actively taking a part in keeping him there, not just grudgingly giving her consent.

All of the statements in the outline are merely hypotheses which may eventually prove valueless or may need to be changed after further study. For example, the process of letting the client "purge his mind" is now being questioned by the committee. How does it happen that the client wishes to do this during a case work interview? What does the case worker do to bring it about and what is she doing during the occurrence? There has been consider-

able discussion of rapport and its relation to establishment of confidence, with the result that rapport is considered a momentary, superficial matter which may be one step toward gaining confidence. The latter is a prolonged process bound up with service and the background of the worker.

Whether or not this form of outline is practical, what types of cases need to be written up in this way, what interviews in a case need to be written up so fully, and whether or not the client shows the same behavior pattern month after month are points which have constantly recurred in the discussions. It was agreed that only so-called intensive cases should be recorded fully; that only interviews in which the client shows best his typical reactions and those showing variations in reactions need be given such study; also that the interview should be one showing significant case work technique with the client. It was felt that the outline, used as marginal notes, would guide the worker in evaluating her material; the discussion at the end would interpret it. In this way subjective material is not confused with objective statement of facts. The use of this outline may result in an indication of technique for evaluation of work and for a guide to subsequent workers on the case, the elimination from the record of material irrelevant to constructive case work, a development of flexibility and imagination, and the providing of a basis for training students and supervising workers. In other words, it will be a record, not only of the client's reactions, but also of the worker's adaptation of her knowledge, training, experience, and personality to the client and his situation. It is obvious that such recording is necessary if case records are to be used successfully in teaching and in studying case work processes.

In the early discussions, there was some feeling that a conscious consideration of one's method with a client before holding an interview would lead to self-consciousness and lack of flexibility. After four months' work all were agreed that it did not create self-consciousness but did develop care in technique. The committee feels that one of the most valuable features of their discussion is the exchange of ideas between workers from different fields. It illustrates the unique function of the American Association of Social Workers in bringing workers of varied ex-

perience together to study their common professional problems. Four fields of case work are represented in the committee by twenty-six members from eight agencies: the field of family case work by the Jewish society and family welfare society; medical social work; psychiatric social work; social work in the public schools.

The difficulty of inferring the content of another's mind through the spoken word and through gestures and facial expression is, of course, the age old problem. The worker can only surmise it, using her knowledge of psychology and her professional experience with people as a basis for understanding and further study. Her objective is to help the individual see himself in relation to his situation and, by helping him change his point of view and habit of thought, become a more effective social being. This necessitates also a consideration and adjustment of the various external social factors affecting the individual in order to achieve the psychological and spiritual effects. The case worker must use not only social resources but also her own personality as tools to obtain her ends, the most important one being the effect of her personality, attitude, and manner upon the client. However, unless her manner and speech express sincerity of purpose and kindness of spirit no amount of skillful technique will avail her, her mind and the client's will not meet, and results will be superficial. The attitude of the case worker necessarily depends on her training and background; therefore, a better selection of workers could be made if it were possible to obtain the same kind of information regarding their early life as is secured regarding clients.

The case work interview is the medium through which the case worker achieves her intangible ends; the case record is the concrete illustration of her observations, methods, and results. Until recently all mention of the worker's technique of interviewing has been carefully omitted from the record in an attempt to make it an objective statement of fact. However, since the record concerns both the worker and the client, the worker's art is as necessary to be included in it as the client's history, reactions, and environmental factors. The worker, indeed, is a part of the client's situation. For this reason the purpose of the com-

mittee is to study and analyze the psychological phases of case work and, as a means of furthering this end, to experiment with methods of recording them.

Reviews were made of the following books and articles by the Committee:

Books: de Schweinitz: *The Art of Helping People Out of Trouble*; Richmond: *Social Diagnosis* and *What Is Social Case Work?* and Wellman: *The Art of Cross Examination*.

Articles: Brisley, Mary S.: "An Attempt to Articulate Processes," *The Family*, October, 1924; Buell, Bradley, "Interviews, Interviewers, and Interviewing," *The Family*, May, 1925; Sheffield, Ada E.: "What Is the Case Worker Really Doing?" *Journal of Social Forces*, 1922, "Three Interviews and the Changing Situation," *Journal of Social Forces*, September, 1922, and "By-Products of a Social Treatment Interview," *Journal of Social Forces*, May, 1925; Taft, Jessie: "Use of the Transfer Within the Office Interview," *National Conference Proceedings*, 1924, and *The Family*, October, 1924; Wright, Lucy: "The Worker's Attitude as an Element in Social Case Work," *The Family*, July, 1924.

The sources of definitions were as follows:

Dictionaries (for all terms): Century, Funk & Wagnalls, Webster, and Baldwin's Dictionary of Philosophy and Psychology.

Attitude: Bleuler: *Textbook of Psychiatry*; Burnham, Wm.: *The Normal Mind*; Dewey, John: *Human Nature and Conduct*; Fernald, Walter E.: "Mental Attitudes" (*Monthly Bulletin*, February, 1924, Massachusetts Society for Mental Hygiene); Morgan, John B.: *Psychology of the Unadjusted School Child*; Wells, Frederic L.: *Mental Adjustments*.

Dynamics: de Schweinitz: *The Art of Helping People Out of Trouble*; Woodworth: *Dynamic Psychology*.

Habit: James, William: *Principles of Psychology*; Dewey, John: *Human Nature and Conduct*; Watson, John: *Psychology from the Standpoint of a Behaviorist*; McDougall: *Social Psychology*; Ellwood, Charles: *Sociology and Modern Social Problems*.

Method: Dictionaries.

Motivation and Stimulation: de Schweinitz: *The Art of Helping People Out of Trouble*.

Process: Sheffield, Ada E.: *The Social Case History*; Inquiry of local social agencies.

TECHNIQUES IN CASE WORK¹

PEARL SALSBERY

TWO years ago I doubt whether I would have used the word "techniques" so generously, in connection with social case work. At that time I was having "processes" firmly rooted in my vocabulary and it did not occur to me that "processes" as described by Miss Brisley at the National Conference² in Toronto could be further analyzed. "Processes" had been analyzed out of a bigger unit—out of the whole "current" or "stream" of family case work. There seemed then to have been three concepts—"stream," "processes," and "techniques"—the "streams" of family case work being composed of "processes," and "processes" in turn being composed of "techniques." Who knows but that shortly we shall be analyzing "techniques" into their component parts?

The dictionary says, "technique is mechanical skill in artistic work"; or, "technique is the details of mechanical performance in any art or science." I like these definitions—they remind me that good technique in case work helps to make that case work an art.

We have a general idea of what the chemist means when he says a student had a good laboratory technique; we hear surgeons refer to techniques in their profession; we hear music critics refer to the technique of a soloist. We enjoy the concert where the technique is good. We trust our surgical work to the surgeon whose technique is good. We choose a chemist whose technique is good. Thus in both art and science we have precedent for the development of techniques.

After a definition, the question which naturally arises is, "how are techniques developed"? Let us begin with the concept that a "process" is made up of one or more techniques. We can classify a "process" as successful or unsuccessful. Suppose a process has been successful (though it is our unsuccessful processes which force us to a study of techniques): we can analyze that process into its component parts. When the component parts

¹ From *The Family*, July, 1927.

² See p. 34.

can no longer be subdivided, then we have reached the stage of isolating techniques. For instance, a visitor persuades a potential client, a husband, to let the social worker see his wife. The process may be "establishing the client's confidence in the agency," but the "techniques" may include "explaining the agency," "meeting the issue," "sharing personal experiences," "building up 'yes responses,'" ³ and many others. Thus the second step in the study of techniques is to isolate them—so that we may recognize a technique when it occurs in different surroundings. The third step is to name them—so that we may have means of comparing experiences with other people and of increasing our common knowledge. The next step, the fourth one, is to use the techniques consciously in varying circumstances—until they become a part of the worker's natural equipment. Meanwhile the fifth step has been in progress—teaching successful techniques to other people. With such detailed study we cannot at present set the limits which our technical skill might reach.

There is nothing new about techniques—except our own efforts to study them. We have used them always but just now we are identifying them and teaching them so that a worker may come to her task more adequately prepared than if she learned, out of her own experience, techniques and their use.

It is almost impossible to discover our techniques of a few years ago; it is difficult even to articulate processes, though our earliest records show something of our efforts to direct the current of family life. In view of this difficulty therefore, instead of indulging in efforts to imagine what processes and techniques were in use in earlier days, it seems more profitable to consider our present techniques.

I am sure we all agree that Miss Richmond gave us our greatest impetus to study techniques when she gave us *Social Diagnosis*, and suggested that a generous and growing conception of the varied possibilities of social work might be acquired in part at least from the use of such technical material as is compiled in *Social Diagnosis*.⁴ The broken backs and dog-eared, thumbed pages of the copies of *Social Diagnosis* on our office shelves—and, most of all, our improvements in the techniques of

³ Overstreet: *Influencing Human Behavior*.

⁴ *Social Diagnosis*, page 376.

case work—point to the contribution which *Social Diagnosis* makes.

In the preface of Miss Colcord's *Broken Homes*, Miss Richmond refers to three stages in dealing with family desertion: (1) the "muddling along" stage; (2) the disciplinary period; and (3) the stage so admirably described in Miss Colcord's book—the stage where "with the unfolding of a philosophy and a *technique* of helping people in and through their social relationships, a new way of dealing with this ancient and perplexing human failing was developed."

The only tool which the social case worker has is the interview. Hence it is not surprising that our most frequent use of the word technique is in connection with interviewing. In fact there is just a little danger that the expression "the techniques of the interview" may fall into disfavor through over-work just as have some other expressions.

Realizing that the technique of interviewing was one of the most important parts of case work, especially of leadership treatment,⁵ one of the case committees of the Twin City Chapter of The American Association of Social Workers has just completed a two years' study of "techniques of interviewing" and this paper is largely a report of its work, supplemented to a slight degree by the work of a visitors' class in the Minneapolis Family Welfare Association and Miss Colcord's class in Advanced Case Work at the University of Minnesota. So far, eighty-six different techniques in ten interviews have been isolated and named; two of the interviews were extracts from novels, the other eight were drawn from the experience of the committee members.

It was found that these techniques grouped themselves into general classifications as follows: (1) The techniques used for lessening tension in the interviewee; (2) techniques used for bringing or keeping the interviewee to the main issue; (3) techniques used for helping the interviewee make difficult admissions; (4) techniques used for breaking defense mechanisms; (5) techniques used for influencing the judgment of the interviewee; (6) techniques used to help the interviewer gain time; (7) techniques used to help the interviewer recover from a bad start. By com-

⁵ See p. 12.

paring these general classifications with Miss Brisley's paper on "An Attempt to Articulate Processes,"⁶ it is evident that our general classifications are really "processes" and the committee has established, to its satisfaction at least, the conclusion stated earlier—that a process is made up of one or more techniques.

Several years ago I recall saying to a younger worker, "But you cannot expect to accomplish much in an interview with Mrs. Jones when she is so emotionally disturbed," and having that worker say, "How can I reduce the emotional tension?" My memory fails me as to my reply but I'm very sure I could not give her any specific suggestions. Now, as the result of this two years' work I can tell her at least fifteen possible ways to lessen tension, their use depending always on the circumstances of the interview: (1) Simulated agreement. Are there not times when it is worth while appearing to agree, where nothing is at stake and a voiced disagreement by the interviewer will lead to a higher emotional pitch or perhaps even bring about the termination of the interview?

(2) Minimizing the seriousness of the interviewee's position. A client was much wrought up because it was necessary for him to apply to the Family Welfare Association, and the interviewer said, "But Mr. Crawford, it isn't so terrible for you to come; why, this society had twenty-five hundred families come to it last year for just the service you are asking!" (3) Analyzing a general statement into its specific parts. And (4) the opposite of this, introducing a general consideration instead of the specific details which bring the emotional storm. Both of these are well illustrated in *The Awakening of Helena Richie* by Margaret Deland, in the interview between Dr. Lavendar and Mrs. Richie, when the latter decides to give up David. In Viola Paradise's "Only a Conversation," published in the *Atlantic Monthly*⁷ general considerations are introduced to relieve fear. The visitor from the Children's Bureau has come to find out about Mrs. Kazalski's children, who are employed in a shrimp and oyster cannery, and Mrs. Kazalski, warned by her more experienced neighbors, won't tell anything about her children, and so the visitor begins after allaying Mrs. Kazalski's fear about govern-

⁶ See p. 34.

⁷ January, 1923.

ment fines, to talk about children—just of children in general, and later about work and school and the health of Mrs. Kazalski's children. (5) Actual physical contact. A touch on the arm, a linking of arms, or a handshake often serve to reduce tension. A worker with the blind always stages her interview so that she may be within touching distance of her interviewee. She always shakes hands with her client at the opening and close of the interview.

One worker recalls with regret her failure to shake hands with a client. Transportation was being arranged to send him to a distant city, away from his family, on the advice of a physician, and he and the worker had had great fun overcoming all the obstacles that arose in connection with planning the trip. Finally the great day arrived—the railroad tickets were safe in hand; the change of trains written out; the money for different kinds of expenses carefully put into separate envelopes, and the purpose written on each envelope; and the client was expressing his gratitude. The worker wished him "good luck," but she failed to shake hands. The door closed after the client's retreating form. Could the droop of his shoulders have been straightened by a hearty hand shake? The worker thinks it might have been, and she turned back to her desk regretting that this technique had been neglected.

The use of (6) "jollyng" and (7) "flattery" may be open to serious objections on ethical grounds. Both seem to be included in our techniques of interviewing.

(8) Humor and the use of the commonplace and whimsical occurred rarely in the interviews studied and give rise to the question whether we are as skillful in humor and the whimsical as we ought to be. Whimsy is so well illustrated in the "Analysis of an interview" by Miss Keiser in the March (1927) *Family*, that it seems necessary only to raise the question whether too much of our interviewing is done on the plane of deadly seriousness? (9) Explaining the agency is a technique encountered in almost every interview which the case committee studied. Perhaps this is accounted for by the fact that these interviews were held by executives and in general with interviewees who came to complain about work done. Such interviews are so frequently characterized by emotional tension that it seemed worth while to give special consideration to techniques which might lessen that tension: (a) Hostess technique, where the interviewee has such a pleasant impression of the interviewer and the agency that he forgets about his complaint. The interviewer may shake hands, invite the interviewee to sit in the most comfortable chair, face him

away from the light and out of the draft, take his hat, ask him to put his parcels on a table, give him a newspaper if it is necessary for him to wait—in short do any or all of the things the hostess does for the comfort of her guest. Perhaps this discussion of the hostess technique is unnecessary, but I am counting on some of you having had the same experience I have had. When someone complains about work done I find I am apt to be on the defensive. I begin the interview on the supposition that the interviewee is wrong and the agency right. However, if I have kept the hostess technique in mind I find myself being so busy as a hostess that I haven't time to be on the defensive. (b) Explaining the agency: This frequently involves explaining not only one's own agency, but other agencies as well and even the whole field of social work. There is no technique requiring such a fine sense of professional loyalty as must be evinced when one agency undertakes to explain the work of another. "Explaining the agency" together with "appeal to reason" and "flattery" are combined sometimes as in this illustration: A landlord came to complain because his back rent had not been paid, to which the social worker replied, "Mr. M, as a business man, you don't really think the Community Fund ought to make up to landlords all their bad debts, do you? We couldn't possibly collect money enough for that. You see you are thinking of one case—but we have to think what would happen if a general policy of that sort were adopted." Appeal to pride is akin to flattery, but not open to the same objection on ethical grounds. Concession, and building up "yes responses" sometimes form the basis for successful interviews with emotional interviewees.

Another important group of techniques comprises that process of "breaking down defense mechanisms." It includes: (1) "Anticipating ultimate outcome." For instance, this query was put to a client whose neglect of her children was extreme, "Then you really wouldn't mind whether your children did go to the State Public School?" (2) "Abusing for defense"—the time honored method of agreeing that Mr. Smith is pretty bad, in order to have his wife fly to his defense and decide he isn't so bad after all. (3) "Puncture." (4) "Rushing." (5) "Swaying by oratory." (6) "Taking client off his guard." (7) "Using acquired informa-

tion." (8) "Putting cards on the table." (9) "Chasing into a corner." (10) "Instilling fear." (11) "Negation."

Another general group of techniques is that group which helps to bring or keep the interviewee to the main issue. It includes, "closing avenues of digression," "avoiding distractions," "dominating the situation," "failure to answer digressive questions," "bringing back to main issue by direct questioning," "sharing of personal experiences of the same nature as the main issue," "authoritative, didactic amplification of statement to refute conclusion," and "yes response." Those techniques used for "influencing judgment" include the transition from known to unknown, reasoning from general to specific and from specific to general considerations, balancing alternatives, forestalling objections, using interviewee's phraseology, following his leads, restating the case, preparing for interviewee to state the plan, and yes-response resulting in clinching the argument. There are others, of course.

So many false starts in case work arise because we do not know the facts, and the facts often involve making difficult admissions—crimes committed, untruths told, poor family background, failures to conform to social conventions, and the many secrets which human beings hug to their breasts through shame or fear. Any techniques which will help to make such admission easier will tend to place our case work on a foundation of rock rather than on sands shifting as the circumstances change. If we know in general some of the objections which may arise in certain circumstances, it is easy to forestall such objections. The Professor in *The Philosopher's Stone*⁸ knows that Tina doesn't wish to tell him of her feelings for a man other than Peter (her husband), lest the Professor tell Peter, but before she needs to tell him her fear, the Professor says "It would be best if I knew something of your reasons—not because I need tell Peter of them, but to give me an idea of what to say to him." Minimizing the seriousness of the admission sometimes helps lower the emotional strain accompanying the admission, as do also looking away, appeal to religious or ethical motives, thinking out loud, telling the client's story for him, encouraging reminiscences, and using terms of affection; sometimes, as in reducing emotional tension, actual

⁸ *The Philosopher's Stone*: Anker Larson.

physical contact—taking the hand, linking of arms and so on. Silence as a technique deserves special consideration. Case workers, especially newer ones, are just a little afraid of silences. Silences constitute techniques in several processes. There are silences which give the interviewee an opportunity to think things out for himself; there are others, painful perhaps, that force the interviewee to make the next move; there are others where the interviewer may be in effect absent—these are the ones which make easier difficult admissions.

This paper does not by any means exhaust the material studied or the conclusion arrived at by the case committee. There are two questions which it seems to me we might raise in connection with a study of techniques: First, is such a study practical? Can we teach techniques of interviewing by the method used in this committee and thus give to younger workers a fund of perfected tools which the older workers have had to master by long experience? After a worker has studied techniques, is she so interested in the mechanics of the interview that the niceties of natural spontaneity are lost? Has she controlled the interview to such an extent that progress gained in the interview is lost as soon as the controls are released? In discussing these questions with a visiting teacher recently, she reminded me that since there was nothing new about techniques except our efforts to use them—why not study them and use them intelligently and purposefully instead of by accident as has been our custom? From the point of view of the interviewee—is it practical?

Suppose an irate landlord demands that the rent for a neurotic woman be paid and, instead, the interviewer by the use of techniques too numerous to mention, brings him to the point where he suggests that maybe he had better evict the woman because the doctor says she must face her own responsibilities. Isn't there a chance that the landlord may feel the interview was expensive—\$20 for the rent he failed to collect, and \$7 for the eviction he promised to institute? And if he has been convinced against his will, the work with the neurotic woman will be more difficult than ever because the landlord will feel that he must protect her against "those clever social workers." Will the interviewee feel that he hasn't had a fair chance to state his case? Will his feeling be one of confidence in the interviewer or will he fear her because she gets him to do things he doesn't wish to do?

If, in spite of all these potential dangers, we decide it is practical, is it ethical to manipulate the behavior of human beings by techniques so laboriously mastered and so adroitly used? On the

basis of some successful processes, even some successful currents of family life, where conscious techniques played a part in the interviews, I am ready to answer in the affirmative and to agree with Overstreet that "the salvaging of human life consists not simply in having high ideals. It consists as much in having the knowledge 'how.' We need, in short, to know how to interest our fellows; how to arouse their expectation; how to build up habits of favorable response; how to lead and adjust and control. All this is the groundwork of our human ethics."⁹

⁹ *Influencing Human Behavior*: H. A. Overstreet.

INDEX

See also Table of Contents for Title and Author

- Analysis of interview, 23, 30, 34, 50, 52, 66, 72, 86, 103, 106, 115, 124
- Approach, 1, 23, 28, 29, 36, 43, 54, 63, 72, 79, 93, 94, 110, 112, 116
- Assuming the obvious, 40, 43, 88
- Attitude changing client's, 17, 19, 29, 43, 49, 51, 56, 59, 65, 69, 89, 100, 114, 119, 129
- Attitude, worker's, 1, 21, 29, 36, 43, 50, 52, 54, 59, 62, 72, 79, 93, 95, 103, 114, 122, 124
- Authority, 3, 7, 23, 37, 39
- Bibliography, vii, 123
- Catharsis, release of fears and emotions, 23, 30, 39, 42, 51, 54, 116, 120
- Client's point of view toward social work, 51, 53, 68
- Coercion, avoidance of, 21, 26, 38, 56
- Confidence, winning, 17, 18, 27, 29, 41, 50, 81, 83, 91, 94, 114, 116, 125
- Distracting influences in interview, 36, 90, 93, 96, 102
- Dynamics, 116
- Emotional appeal, 41, 103, 104
- Emphasis on strengths rather than weaknesses, 3, 7, 31, 37, 50, 56, 59, 82, 83, 92, 128
- "Executive" treatment, 15
- Flexibility, 3, 4, 21, 23, 29, 35, 94
- Humor, 3, 6, 40, 43, 117, 128
- Individualization, 3, 29, 37, 61, 79
- "Leadership" treatment, 16, 26, 34, 126
- Light touch, 3, 6, 40, 43, 117, 128
- Method, distinguished from process, 116
- Motivation, 21, 31, 41, 49, 51, 60, 83, 91, 102, 114, 116, 119
- Non-shockability, 3, 6, 30, 40, 43, 59, 65
- Objectivity, 36, 43, 56, 59, 66
- Outline of interview, 98, 116
- Participation of client in making plans, 10, 23, 29, 34, 38, 50, 54, 69, 82, 93, 102, 114, 117
- Persuasion, 5, 21, 26, 49, 56, 59, 86, 91, 118
- Physical contact, 128, 131
- Preparation for interview, 35, 62, 79, 94, 111, 112, 121
- Processes analyzed, 23, 30, 34, 50, 52, 86, 103, 106, 115, 124
- Purposefulness, 21, 61, 79, 91, 94, 109, 116
- Rapport, 30, 35, 42, 49, 63, 94, 112, 116, 118, 120, 127. *See also* Approach, Attitude, worker's
- Relationship, client-worker, 1, 10, 30, 41, 47, 69, 72, 108
- Releasing client's powers, 44, 54
- Respect for personality, 2, 23, 29, 37, 56, 60, 73, 82, 103
- Setting, 35, 49, 55, 64, 75, 93, 96, 100, 110, 116, 118.
- Sharing experiences, 43, 130.
- Strengths, emphasis on, 3, 7, 31, 32, 37, 50, 56, 59, 82, 83, 92, 128
- Taking advantage of "breaks," 28, 29, 43, 59, 81
- Techniques, 23, 30, 34, 50, 52, 66, 86, 103, 114, 117, 120, 124
- Tension, lessening, 35, 45, 63, 94, 114, 116, 126, 127, 129
- Time element, 12, 36, 54
- Transfer, 41, 103, 104
- Treatment, 12, 26, 38, 42, 47, 49, 54, 61, 81, 82, 89, 91, 100, 109, 116
- Understanding, coming to a common, 9, 39, 53, 102, 114
- Verbatim Interview, 71, 100, 109

HV41
F21

C1-Rf

Interviews interviewers and

AUTHOR

interviewing in social case

TITLE

work.

DATE
LOANED

BORROWER'S NAME

Reference Copy

C. 1 R. 1

Interviews interviewers and
interviewing in social case work.

[illegible]

